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DISCOURSES

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

On Saving Faith.
On the Soul's Immateriality.
On a Future State from Reason.

An Appendix to the Proofs of a Future State from Reason.

By the Reverend Mr. HENRY GROVE,
of TAUNTON.

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A

DISCOURSE

Concerning

Saving Faith.

1736.

DISCOURSE

concerning

Saving Faith.

TO THE

READER.

THAT *there ſhould be controverſies among Chriſtians in every age of the Church about things of a doubtful nature, and of leſſer importance, is not at all ſtrange; nor ſhould we have any reaſon to lament it, provided they were carried on with the temper they ought to be; ſince, in that caſe, they would only ſerve to rouſe the attention of their minds, and to exerciſe and improve their virtues, their humility, diligence, ſincerity, candour and charity: but it is really ſurprizing that* Faith *itſelf, that* Faith *which is eſſential to the character of a good Chriſtian, ſhould have been the ſubject of as intricate, as angry, and as endleſs diſputes, as almoſt any one thing in Religion. Is it that the* Sacred Penmen *have not expreſſed*

themſelves with ſufficient clearneſs in this matter? We may ſafely argue the contrary from the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, which afford the ſtrongeſt aſſurance that whatever Duty *is indiſpenſably required of all, under the higheſt ſanctions, hath theſe two marks, among others,* viz. that it is plain, and eaſy enough for the ſimpleſt perſons to underſtand—and not unbecoming, much leſs impoſſible, for the wiſeſt to practiſe. *By theſe characteriſticks I take the liberty to examine the accounts given of* Faith *by others, its* Nature, *the* Grounds *of its acceptableneſs to God, and the* Manner *in which it juſtifies; and by the ſame rules I invite my Readers to try every thing that is here offered to their conſideration.*

It is well, in the mean while, that, to whatever cauſe this diverſity of ſentiments and language about Faith *is owing, all honeſt and upright minds are agreed in their care to get the* thing, *how widely ſoever they differ in their* notions *of it. They* act *right, though they may* think *wrong. They are unanimous in taking Chriſt for their Lord and Maſter, loving him more than any wordly intereſt or relation, or even life itſelf; receiving, as unqueſtionably true, all that they apprehend him to have taught in the Goſpel, obeying his commands; and by him believing in God, who raiſed him from the dead, and gave him glory, that their* faith *and* hope *might be in God. And, upon this foundation, in which they all*

agree,

agree, the hopes of good men, and they themſelves, ſtand unſhaken.

However, though no one who hath the truth *of* Faith, *ſhall be finally rejected for having entertained a* miſtaken notion *of it, even though that* notion *be ſuch that he could not continue to act upon it but to the loſs of his everlaſting ſalvation, yet it were very much to be wiſhed, that as many as profeſs the Goſpel had right apprehenſions in this matter; the want of theſe being frequently the occaſion, that* bad men *never become good, from an unhappy conceit that they need not be better than they are; and that* good men *either run into melancholy doubts and fears on the one hand, or, on the other, are tempted to pride and uncharitableneſs; thinking worſe of themſelves, or of others, than they ought, both which it is alike their duty and intereſt, as much as poſſible to avoid.*

But how ſhall we be able to come at the truth *in ſuch a cloud of diſputes, and diſputants? By ſearching the* Scriptures, *to which they all appeal, and bringing with us a ſincere deſire to find the* truth, *and a ſtedfaſt reſolution to embrace it, whether it ſhall happen to favour, or contradict, the ſyſtem of opinions into which we have been initiated. Whence ſhould the Scripture-notion of* Saving-Faith, *or any thing elſe belonging to* Revelation, *be drawn, but from Scripture? And whereas the ſame*

Scriptures are capable of different ſenſes, or at leaſt have had different ſenſes put upon them, if, after impartial examination, it ſhould appear that one of theſe ſenſes repreſents the Goſpel as a plain, conſiſtent, and reaſonable inſtitution, viſibly adapted to promote the glory of God in the higheſt, on earth peace, and good will towards men, another not, we ſhould, without the leaſt heſitation, make choice of the former. To ſerve theſe excellent ends is the Author's *deſign in publiſhing the enſuing* Treatiſe; *in which, if he hath not always hit the* truth, *he is pretty ſure he hath conſtantly aimed at it, and hopes he hath fallen into no miſtakes that affect the main ſcheme of Chriſtian Doctrine, and may be the leaſt prejudice to the intereſts of practical Religion.*

Not to draw out this Preface *to a greater length; how happy would it be for the chriſtian world, would the diſciples of* Jeſus *ſet themſelves more univerſally to merit that name by their love one to another, (which is the teſt of diſcipleſhip their Maſter himſelf hath given them) would they forbear one another in love, not haſtily ſuppoſe a capital error in the Faith where there was a good life; be ready to inſtruct, and to receive inſtruction, in a ſpirit of meekneſs; and, whereto they have already attained, would walk by the ſame rule, and mind the ſame thing, even the credit and intereſt of their common cauſe, and their mutual*

tual edification in faith, and hope, and charity! One would think that all ſincere Chriſtians ſhould heartily unite in their Prayers *for ſo deſireable a ſtate of things ; and why not therefore in their* Endeavours *to bring it about?*

ROM. i. 16.

—*To every one that believeth*—

THE Apoſtle *Paul*, when he wrote this Epiſtle, had not been at *Rome*, but declares his readineſs to preach the Goſpel there alſo; of which he immediately adds the reaſon in this Verſe, *For I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt; for it is the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth, to the* Jew *firſt, and alſo to the* Greek. He was not aſhamed of the meanneſs of thoſe to whom he preached the Goſpel, when he publiſhed it among perſons of no figure and reputation; nor of the Goſpel itſelf, when he was called to preach it to the great, the mighty,

mighty, and the learned. The *Romans* eſteemed themſelves ſome of the wiſeſt of mankind; as indeed they deſerved that character in regard of their laws, the arts and refinements of civil life, and other human accompliſhments. But if there was any ſuſpicion that, on this account, our Apoſtle was leſs forward to come to *Rome*, as if conſcious that he ſhould not be able to make good his Cauſe among thoſe knowing and inquiſitive men, nor to perſuade them as he had done ignorant and credulous people in other places, he intimates to them *that this was a very great miſtake*; ſince, at *Rome* itſelf, he ſhould not be aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt; at *Rome*, where there was a reſort of people of all countries and religions, of all humours and capacities: ſo that, if Chriſtianity had been an impoſture, it was ſure to be detected and expoſed, as it ſtood at defiance with all other religions; and aimed at nothing leſs than building to itſelf an univerſal dominion on their ruins; yet, even there, was not this great man aſhamed to preach the Goſpel; he means more than he expreſſes, he ſhould be ſo far from being aſhamed of it, as to *glory* and *triumph* in it, *knowing it to be the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth.*

My deſign in chuſing theſe words, is to conſider the *condition* here laid down of the Goſpel happineſs or ſalvation, which is Faith.

To

To believe a thing is in general the ſame as to aſſent to the truth of it; and, conſequently, the direct and immediate notion of *believing* in the Text, can be no more than being perſuaded of the truth of the Goſpel. But is this all then, that is required of us in order to our preſent and final acceptance with God? When it is ſaid, that *whoſoever believeth ſhall recieve remiſſion of ſins*; that *whoſoever believeth ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life*; and that *he that believeth ſhall be ſaved*; is nothing more inſiſted on than barely believing the doctrine of the Goſpel to be true? Is the Goſpel *the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth*, in this large ſenſe of the word *believeth?* If ſo, inſtead of aſking, as the diſciples did on another occaſion, *Who then ſhall be ſaved?* we might invert the queſtion, and ſay, *Who then ſhall not be ſaved?* For how few are there, who having been born and bred in a Chriſtian Country, and had a reverence for the Chriſtian Faith inſtilled into them from their very infancy, are not ſo fully poſſeſſed with a belief, that every thing is true which they meet with in their *Bibles*, as not to have any doubt concerning it? But, neither the notion of God, as an infinitely wiſe and holy Being, nor the expreſs aſſertions and declarations of Scripture, will admit of our attributing ſo much virtue to the mere *act of believing*, unattended with a good life; this will be further evident in the ſequel of this

this Subject; in diſcourſing upon which I ſhall,

I. With all the clearneſs I can, ſtate the Scripture-notion of *Saving Faith.*

II. Inquire what the reaſons may be ſuppoſed to have been, that every thing neceſſary to be done in order to obtain everlaſting ſalvation, is in the Goſpel, ſo often repreſented and compriſed under the ſingle term of *believing.*

III. I ſhall indeavour to vindicate the honour of the Goſpel, in making *Faith* the condition of ſalvation, and admitting all, without diſtinction, who have this *Faith.*

I. I begin with ſtating the Scripture-notion of *Saving Faith.* It is an excellent deſcription, that is given of Faith in general by the Writer to the *Hebrews,* [a] *Faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen*; which words do, in a very lively manner, ſet forth the general nature of that Faith on which juſt and pious men have acted in all ages of the world, as well before the Goſpel, as ſince. But as this was not deſigned for a compleat definition of that Faith which is intended in the Text, and indiſpenſibly required under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, which carries in it a particular reſpect

[a] Heb. xi. 1.

reſpect to the revelation God hath made us by his Son, it is therefore neceſſary, in treating of this Subject, to lay down another definition of Faith. That which I would humbly offer to conſideration is this.

Faith is ſuch a firm and lively perſuaſion of the truth of the Goſpel, and of the great things therein contained, thoſe eſpecially that concern man as a ſinner, and this upon the teſtimony of God the revealer, as ingages the Chriſtian to chuſe and act ſuitably to the nature and importance of the things he believes.

This definition includes ſeveral Particulars, which it will be needful to ſpeak to a little diſtinctly.

1. The general object of the Chriſtian's Faith is the *Goſpel-Revelation*, of the truth of which he hath a fixed perſuaſion in his mind. He believes the Goſpel of Chriſt to be the Goſpel of God, that is was brought down from heaven by its divine Author, and that it leads thither. When therefore it is ſaid, *that the Goſpel is the power of God to every one that believes*, it is plain, the object of this belief (though not expreſſed) is the Goſpel; the Goſpel promiſes ſalvation to them that believe it, in the Goſpel ſenſe of the word *believing*. Accordingly one of the Evangeliſts, ſpeaking of the beginning of our Saviour's miniſtry, ſaith, [b] *that he came preaching*

[b] Mark i. 14, 15.

ing the Goſpel of the kingdom of God; and ſaying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Goſpel. And from hence it was, that the converts to Chriſtianity were afterwards diſtinguiſhed by the name of *believers* or *of them that believed.* [c] *And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.* [d] *Be thou an example of the believers.* [e] *And all that believe were together.* The perſons meant in theſe, and other places, are evidently the diſciples of Chriſt, or ſuch as believed the Goſpel, in diſtinction from thoſe that did not. And it is only in this *reſtrained* ſenſe of *believing*, that the title of *believers* can be appropriated to the profeſſors of Chriſtianity.

Mankind have never been without all Religion; and even thoſe of them, who have been moſt erroneous in their apprehenſions of divine things, have in general believed a God, a Providence, and a Future State. The *Jews*, though they reject the Goſpel, do to this day believe in the one true God, and ſo do the *Mahometans*; and may therefore, in this extenſive ſenſe of the word, be called *believers*: but Chriſtians alone believe, and profeſs the truth of the Goſpel, the laſt diſpenſation of God to mankind, and the moſt perfect; which is the reaſon, that the name of *believers* was peculiarly applied to thoſe who

[c] Acts v. 14. [d] 1 Tim. iv. 12. [e] Acts ii. 44.

who received the Goſpel, in oppoſition to others who had the Goſpel preached to them, but did not believe it. The promiſe of ſalvation was not made to ſuch; they were juſtly excluded, who put the word of ſalvation from them. And the caſe is not altogether unlike now, of thoſe who have been inſtructed in the Chriſtian Faith, and had opportunities of acquainting themſelves with the evidences of it, and yet, to gratify ſome corrupt principle, caſt off the profeſſion of that Religion in which they have been educated; ſuch perſons as theſe, whatever elſe they believe (though it is much to be ſuſpected, their religious belief is otherwiſe very defective) ſince they believe not the Goſpel, have no title to the ſalvation or happineſs which it promiſes to the ſincere followers of Jeſus; of which I may have occaſion to ſay more under another part of my Subject.

You ſee then, that the general object of *Saving Faith* is the Goſpel, or the truth of that Revelation which God hath vouchſafed to the world by his Son. Good men have always believed in God, according to the diſpenſation they were under; they did ſo before the times of the Goſpel, and even before there was any written Revelation; and they had the happineſs to pleaſe God by their Faith, as well as we Chriſtians do by ours; as we learn from *Heb.* xi. where honourable mention is made of the examples and atchievements

ments of Faith in ancient times. The great articles of natural Religion (for inſtance, that God is, that he is the Creator and Governor of the world, and that he will be a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him) with thoſe additional manifeſtations of himſelf, and of his intended favours, which God was pleaſed to make at ſundry times, and in divers manners, to the Fathers, were the object and the meaſure of Faith in thoſe former ages of the world; whereas now, that the Goſpel is made known to us, and faithfully conveyed down to the preſent time in the writings of the *New Teſtament*, this is become the object and the rule of Faith to us Chriſtians.

Let me add, that the belief of the *Chriſtian Religion* implies the belief of the *Jewiſh*, on which it is founded, as inſtituted by God; though with a deſign it ſhould laſt no longer in force than till the coming of the *Meſſiah*, and the eſtabliſhment of a more ſpiritual kingdom by him. Notwithſtanding which, the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament* continue to be of great uſe to us Chriſtians; though the peculiar precepts of it are no longer obliging.

11. The particular object of the Chriſtian's Faith, are the particular truths of which the Goſpel-Revelation is compoſed. It is not enough to believe, in general, that the Goſpel is a divine Revelation, or that the Scripture

ture is the Word of God, unleſs we have a competent knowledge of what the Scripture teaches concerning God, and the duty that God requires of man. For why are theſe things taught in the Scripture, but that we ſhould learn them? To what end is a Revelation, of which we do not know any thing of the contents? It is the ſame, in effect, as if there was no ſuch Revelation. We believe that the Bible contains an invaluable treaſure of divine and heavenly truth; but are we ever the wiſer or richer for this treaſure, as it is locked up in that ſacred Volume, and is not ſo much as looked into, much leſs hath any good uſe made of it? He that is able to give no other account of his Faith than this, that he believes that Chriſt hath declared the whole counſel of God, either himſelf in perſon, or, by his Spirit in the Apoſtles, but that indeed he is ignorant what this counſel of God is; he, I ſay, that hath no other Faith than this, doth not much better deſerve the name of a *Chriſtian believer*, than another doth of a *learned man*, for buying books in all faculties and languages, which he prides himſelf in having, though he neither underſtands, nor reads them. It is true, when the *Eunuch* deſired to be baptized, *Philip*'s anſwer is, [f] *if thou believeſt with all thy heart thou mayeſt*; and the *Eunuch*, hereupon, making this con-

 feſſion,

[f] Acts viii. 37.

feſſion, *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God,* that *Evangeliſt* immediately baptized him.

And this, it muſt be owned, was all that appears to have been ordinarily required in order to *Baptiſm* by the *Apoſtles*, and the reſt of the firſt Preachers of Chriſtianity, that they, to whom they preached, declared their *belief*, that *Jeſus was the Chriſt*, *the Son of God*; or in ſome other form of words of the like import to this. And who, among us, does not believe ſo much as this comes to? So that, if that alone will make a Chriſtian, we are all as good Chriſtians as any whatſoever. But, let us not run too faſt. The *belief* of this ſingle article was all required of the firſt Converts to Chriſtianity, to intitle them to *Baptiſm* but not to give them a title to *everlaſting Salvation.* By profeſſing to believe, that *Jeſus* was a Teacher come from *God*, the *Meſſiah*, or *Chriſt*, who (as the woman of *Samaria* ſaith) *when he came would teach them all things*, they were underſtood to chooſe him for their maſter, and to promiſe, that they would yield themſelves intirely to his inſtructions and commands; after which, being now become the diſciples of Chriſt, they were (according to the commiſſion given to the *Apoſtles*, [g] *to be taught to obſerve all things whatſoever Chriſt had commanded.* But if, inſtead of this, they had refuſed to be

[g] Mat xxviii. 19, 20.

be more fully instructed in the things concerning the kingdom of God, contenting themselves with their confession of this one article, *that Jesus is the Christ*, as sufficient to distinguish them from *Jews* and *Heathens*, they would have been self-condemned; entering themselves into the school of Christ, but not learning any thing of him, and so their Faith would have profited them nothing.

Wherefore according to mens several abilities, they are obliged to acquaint themselves with the Doctrine of Christ; not only laying the foundation of a general Repentance towards God, and of a general Faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, *but going on to perfection: for* tho' *other foundation of the* Christian Religion *can no man lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus the Christ*, yet, it is supposed, that we may and ought to be continually building upon this foundation, 1 *Cor.* iii. 11. The superstructure being a necessary part of the building, as well as the foundation; and one of them having an obvious relation to the other. For, though the same measure of knowledge and Faith is not expected from all; yet it is expected, that all should be sincerely desirous of knowing the truth, and have that degree of knowledge and Faith, which is sufficient to prove the sincerity of their desire before God, and necessary to their leading a holy and christian life. How much knowledge

and Faith is neceſſary to this end, it is impoſſible for us to determine, who cannot ſee into the hearts of men, nor pretend to judge of their ſeveral capacities and advantages for underſtanding the truth. Which being conſidered, what we have to do, is to leave others to the judgment of God, not condemning them, if their lives do not condemn them; while we are very careful as to ourſelves, and our own conduct, that we do not, through ſloth and negligence, or the prejudices of depraved affections, want that Faith which we ought to have, that we may be approved of God.

III. There is a more ſpecial object ſtill of the Chriſtian's Faith, viz. That part of the Goſpel Revelation which more directly concerns us as *ſinners*. It was to help us in our lapſed ſtate, that God ſent his Son into the world, and therefore ſuch things as more immediately relate to the method of our redemption, and the Perſon of our Redeemer, we are more immediately, and eſpecially, as *ſinful creatures*, obliged to know and believe. As, that *there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus; the incarnate Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God; and who, being in the form of God, made himſelf of no reputation, and took on him the form of a ſervant; and, being found in faſhion as a man, humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even the death*

of

of the croſs: ſo that *now God is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf, not imputing their iniquities to them. We have now redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins; and may come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need; having a great High Prieſt paſſed into the heavens, Jeſus the Son of God, who is the Propitiation for our ſins, and not for ours only, but for the ſins of the whole world, is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come uuto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them:* that *the Spirit of Chriſt dwelleth in good men, ſanctifying them throughout in ſoul, in ſpirit, and in body; and is the earneſt of the inheritance untill the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion:* that *whatever we do, whether in word or in deed, we are to do all in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to the Father by him, and for him.* In fine, that *God hath appointed a day when he will judge the world in righteouſneſs by Jeſus Chriſt; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.*

Theſe, and ſuch like truths, compoſe the glorious ſcheme of man's redemption; and, upon that account, are the *ſpecial* objects of the Faith and contemplation of God's redeemed ones. Theſe are the *Peculiarities* of the Goſpel, which throw an amiable and awful luſtre about it, and are the very rea-

ſon and foundation of the name; for the word *Goſpel*, ſignifies the ſame as *glad tidings:* and, what is it makes the Goſpel to be ſuch *glad tidings* of great joy, but this, that it inſtructs us in the plan, or method, which the wiſdom of God hath contrived, and the grace of God purſued, for the recovery of a loſt world? Hence it appears, that the *mediation of Chriſt*, his *ſacrafice* and *interceſſion*, are the things which an evangelical Faith is more peculiarly converſant about.

And that which further ſhews the neceſſity of fixing the eye of our Faith diſtinctly, and ſtedfaſtly, upon theſe ſubjects is, that we cannot otherwiſe apprehend and diſcharge our duty, *as ſinful creatures*, under a law of Grace. How is it poſſible we ſhould be ſo deeply humbled for our ſins as we ought to be, and diſpoſed to an ingenuous and godly ſorry for them, as beyond meaſure aggravated by that light and love againſt which they have been committed? How is it poſſible, we ſhould rightly underſtand what we owe to the Saviour of the world the honour and affection due to him from thoſe, whoſe ſouls he hath ranſomed at ſo dear a rate; and adore and magnify, in a becoming manner, the freeneſs, the condeſcention, and the unſearchable riches of the Grace of God? In a word, how is it poſſible, we ſhould devote ourſelves to the God of our lives with that fervency of ſpirit, and full pur-

purpoſe of heart, which may be expected from thoſe who are created again in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works; and begotten to the hope of a happineſs, which it could hardly have entered into our hearts to be deſigned for us, even in a ſtate of innocence? How is it poſſible, we ſhould have a ſenſe of our duty in all theſe reſpects, or how perform it, if we do not look into thoſe things which the Goſpel hath revealed concerning the univerſal corruption of mankind, the Perſon choſen to be their reſtorer, the early and frequent notices that were given of the deſign of God, to ſend him into the world; the nature and greatneſs of the ſalvation of which he is the author, and the way and method in which he hath accompliſhed it? Without an explicit knowledge and belief of theſe things, how can we be in a capacity to make the proper returns for all this goodneſs and mercy of God towards us?

Before I advance any further, I would make this uſe of the *three* foregoing Particulars——To obſerve that *Saving Faith* cannot be the ſame with *Aſſurance*, by which is uſually meant a confident perſuaſion, that *our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life*; that *Chriſt died for us in particular*; *hath choſen us out of the world*; *taken our ſins upon himſelf and given us his Righteouſneſs.* To prove the falſity of this idea of Faith, as the ſame with the belief of a man's *perſonal*

Election, I might argue from the apparent abſurdity of Chriſt's being properly a ſinner, and our being porperly righteous by *mere imputation*; and of that *exchange of Perſons* upon which this *imputation* is founded. Since God, who ſees and judges of every thing as it really is, can never reckon Chriſt to have been truely guilty of our ſins, or, that we performed his obedience. For though he may, and does, deal more graciouſly with us for the ſake of the perfect righteouſneſs and humble obedience, unto death, of his well beloved Son, yet he can never judge the righteouſneſs and obedience of that excellent Perſon to be properly ours; this being, in the nature of things, abſolutely impoſſible. And the foundation being removed, upon which this notion of *Saving Faith* is built, the notion itſelf muſt fall to the ground.

But, ſetting aſide this, my argument, at preſent, is drawn from what hath been ſaid before concerning the object of *Saving Faith*; this is no other than the Goſpel, and the ſeveral important truths contained in it. So that the object of Faith is always ſome revealed truth. But now, where is it revealed, that God hath *elected* ſuch and ſuch *particular perſons*; and, that Chriſt *laid down his life* for them *by name?* Or, ſo much as this, that a man does not believe to any ſaving purpoſe, till he believes his own particular

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ſalvation? Without entering into a diſpute about *Election*, this may paſs for indiſputable, that no man can know himſelf to be of the number of God's *Elect*, but by having the marks of the *Elect* upon him; and this is matter not of *external Revelation*, but of *private obſervation and experience*. And therefore, though the *Aſſurance* men have of their being in the love of God be never ſo well grounded, even upon their having reſpect to all his commandments, and, conſequently, they are in a ſafe and happy condition; yet, this *Aſſurance* cannot be that *Faith* which is neceſſary to the divine acceptance, becauſe it immediately regards their own particular title to ſalvation; a thing no where revealed in Scripture, which comprehends the intire object of the Chriſtian's Faith. To which, this other plain reaſon might be added, that *Aſſurance* cannot be the ground of our acceptance, becauſe it pre-ſuppoſes it; ſince we muſt be accepted before we can truly believe, and judge, that we are ſo.

This obſervation I thought the more needful, being apprehenſive, that this notion of *Saving Faith*, as the ſame with *Aſſurance*, is good for little elſe but to make *the hearts of the righteous ſad, whom God would not have made ſad; and to ſtrengthen the hearts and hands of the wicked in their evil ways.* A ſerious humble Chriſtian, who firmly believes all that God hath revealed in the Goſpel,

pel, may not believe himſelf to be in a ſtate of Grace, and beloved of God, though he really is ſo; having a right apprehenſion of Chriſtianity, and a right practice built upon that apprehenſion, by a wrong notion of himſelf. And if he be one who believes the doctrine of *abſolute decrees*, and is, at the ſame time, of a temper naturally timorous, and apt to ſurmiſe the worſt of himſelf, he will, for this very reaſon, be more inclined to queſtion his *Election* of God; and then, becauſe he queſtions this, will be more apt to condemn himſelf as wanting true Faith; the thought of which will further confirm his fears, that he is a caſt-away. It is to no purpoſe to tell him, that he muſt not give way to ſuch thoughts; that unbelief is the greateſt of ſins; and to deſpair of mercy, the ready way not to have it; this is a very ſtrange method of adminiſtering comfort to a ſorrowful ſpirit, and inſtead of freeing ſuch a one from his melancholy, only ſinks him the deeper in it. While others of a more robuſt and ſanguine complection, and who had rather ſubmit to any ſhift than forſake their ſins, gladly lay hold of the handle afforded them by theſe notions; and draw this concluſion from them (which, it muſt be confeſſed, follows but too naturally from the premiſſes) that, ſince God acts out of mere *ſovereignty*, and not from any regard to the *reaſon* and *fitneſs* of things; ſince Chriſt hath

hath fulfilled all righteouſneſs for thoſe who are united to him by Faith; and this Faith is nothing elſe but a ſtrong perſuaſion, that they are ſome of theſe perſons; that, therefore, whatſoever ſins they have committed, and ſtill continue to commit, they have none to anſwer for, and need not any thing further to make their *Calling* and *Election* ſure; than which there cannot be a more fatal deluſion.

If we ſpeak exactly, this *Aſſurance* doth not belong to Faith at all, not ſo much as to the perfection of it, but to hope; and is repreſented as a higher degree of that. [g] *We deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end.* And though in the 22d verſe of the 10th Chapter, we read of the *full aſſurance of Faith*, it is plain the thing directly meant, is our having a firm perſuaſion of the truth of God's promiſes in the Goſpel, and the perfection of Chriſt's attonement; which will be a mighty incouragement to draw nigh unto God, if, as nothing is wanting on his part, we indeavour that nothing be ſo on ours.

IV. Faith imbraces the things revealed as true, upon the teſtimony of God the revealer. This is the immediate ground of the Chriſtian's Faith. This, and that, is revealed to him by God, therefore he believes it to be true. And, it being firſt granted, that

[g] Heb. vi. 11.

that the *Scripture is the Word of God*, how could Faith reſt upon a more immoveable foundation? Is it thought reaſonable to admit the truth of what is reported by a man like ourſelves, if he be a *credible witneſs*, and much more of what is reported by ſeveral ſuch witneſſes, concurring in the ſame thing? And muſt it not be much more reaſonable to credit that, which hath the word of God himſelf to warrant the truth of it? [h] *If we receive the witneſs of men, the witneſs of God is greater.* It is poſſible, that a wiſe man may be deceived; and one, that paſſes for an honeſt man, be found a deceiver; nay, it is not impoſſible (though it be very improbable) that ſeveral men, having all of them a reputation for probity and ſimplicity, may yet conſpire in contriving and propagating a known falſhood, to ſerve the purpoſes of ambition and avarice; *but let God be true, though all men be liars*; he is too wiſe to be deceived himſelf, and too good to deceive his creatures. And, therefore, we may ſafely rely upon the word of God; ſince *heaven and earth may paſs away, but not one iota, or tittle of that word, can fall to the ground.* But then we muſt be careful not to miſtake the ſenſe and meaning of the Revelation. Let us give all diligence to know the mind and will of God in the Scriptures; and,

[h] 1 John v. 9.

and, when ſecure of that, we can have no further room for doubt.

For the clearer explication of this particular, let me add, that, when the teſtimony of God is made the ground of Faith, there is a diſtinction or two, of great uſe, to be carried in mind.

The firſt diſtinction is between believing what God hath revealed, and believing that he hath revealed it; for believing what God hath revealed, no other reaſon need be given than the *authority* of God himſelf; *it muſt be true, becauſe God, who cannot lie, hath ſaid it.* But why do you believe that God hath ſaid it? Or what aſſurance have you, that the Goſpel is a Revelation from God? Of this, there are ſeveral proofs; that which the Goſpel itſelf moſt commonly appeals to, is the *demonſtration of the Spirit*; or thoſe *ſigns* and *wonders* which attended the firſt publication, and the firſt publiſhers, of the Goſpel. Our Saviour, therefore, ſaith, [i] *I have greater witneſs than that of* John; *for the works which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame works which I do bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me.* Beſides which, there was a voice from heaven, ſaying, *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*; which is what our Lord refers to, when, after having mentioned his miracles, he adds, ver. 37, of the ſame Chapter,

[i] John v. 36.

ter, *And the Father himſelf who hath ſent me, hath born witneſs of me*; i. e. not only by the works which he hath authorized me to do, but by an immediate declaration from heaven. In like manner, God is ſaid *to bear witneſs to the Apoſtles of Chriſt*, [k] *and to the Word of his Grace* in their mouths, [l] *by ſigns and wonders, and divers miracles of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will.* And for this reaſon, we may ſuppoſe, the Apoſtle *Paul* to have ſtiled the Goſpel the [m] *teſtimony of God*; God himſelf having given his teſtimony to the Goſpel, by inabling the firſt teachers of it to publiſh it to all nations in languages which they never learned, and to confirm it with miraculous works which they performed in his name.

This, I apprehend, to be always meant by the *teſtimony* or *witneſs of the Spirit*, in Scripture; agreeably to the promiſe made by Chriſt to his diſciples, [n] *When the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtify of me*; which he eminently did, on, and after, the day of *Pentecoſt*; when having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, our Lord did, by the miraculous effuſion of the *Spirit*, fulfil his ingagement to the Apoſtles. Some have thought, that the

[k] Acts xiv. 3. [l] Heb. ii. 4. [m] 1 Cor. ii. 1.
[n] John xv. 26.

the *sanctifying*, *comforting* operations of the Spirit of God on the souls of the faithful, in all ages of the church, may not very improperly, be called *the inward witness of the Spirit to the truth of Christianity*; righteousness, peace, joy and love, being fruits of the Spirit, from which the sincere Christian justly argues the heavenly nature and original of that doctrine, which is the great moral instrument of the Spirit in the production of these things. But then, how proper, or common, soever it may be to call this *the witness of the Spirit*, it doth not appear, that the Scripture ever uses the phrase of *the witness of the Spirit*, in this sense; and therefore, as it hath been so often abused, it may perhaps be better to forbear it. What the Apostle says, [o] *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God*, seems to have a special reference to the miraculous gifts of the Spirit; which being poured out upon the *Gentile*, as well as *Jewish* converts proved the *Gentiles* to be the children of God, in the same *collective sense*, as the *Jews*; [p] *to whom alone*, before *pertained the adoption*. And if, together with this, they had the testimony of their own consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity they had their conversation in the world; the evidence, arising from this joint testimony of the Spirit of God,

[o] Rom. viii. 16. [p] Rom. ix. 4.

God, and their own ſpirits, for their being the children of God, was compleat.

As for thoſe well known words, [q] *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witneſs in himſelf*; either the meaning may be, that the Chriſtian believer was, at that time, made partaker of thoſe miraculous gifts, which were the Spirit's witneſs to Chriſtianity; or rather, his *having this witneſs in himſelf*, is no more than heartily receiving it. And, indeed, the connection of the words, with the 9th, and latter part of the 10th verſe, ſeem to require this interpretation of them. In the 9th verſe, it is ſaid, *if we receive the witneſs of men, the witneſs of God is greater; for this is the witneſs of God, which he hath teſtified of his Son*; then in the 10th verſe follows an account of thoſe who do, or do not, *receive the witneſs of God*; namely, thoſe who do, or do not, *believe in Chriſt: He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witneſs in himſelf*, (by believing in *Chriſt*, he receiveth the witneſs of God concerning him) *he that believeth not God* (or rather as it is in ſome Copies, *the Son*) *hath made him* (i. e. *God*) *a lyar, becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.* He rejects that teſtimony which the former, who gives the moſt intire and cordial aſſent to it, hath in himſelf; one *ſets to his ſeal, that God is true*; the other *makes him a lyar.*

To

[q] 1 John v. 10.

To proceed— What hath been ſaid, is, I think, ſufficient to denominate the Faith of the true Chriſtian, a divine Faith; for, as the object of this Faith is divine truth, and the immediate reaſon and foundation of it, is the divine veracity; ſo, further, one main reaſon of believing the Goſpel to be a Revelation from God, is the witneſs given to it by the Divine Spirit, in its miraculous and extraordinary operations. To which we may add, that divine internal aſſiſtance which concurs in the production of Faith. It cannot be denied, that all this does not come up to what ſome have pleaded for; who, by the teſtimony of the Spirit, underſtand a kind of immediate and particular revelation or inward voice, by which the mind is impreſſed after an irreſiſtible manner, and aſſured of the truth of the Scriptures without all argumentation or reaſoning, whether from miracles, or even the internal evidence of the Scriptures themſelves. What theſe men miſtakenly call *the Spirit of God*, is, in truth, *the Spirit of Enthuſiaſm*; and renders all thoſe, that are poſſeſſed by it, very unfit to be ſoberly reaſoned with. However, I will venture to offer a ſingle conſideration, which if it does not convince theſe men, may be of uſe to keep ſome others from runing into their abſurd and dangerous notions.

The conſideration, I mean, is this—that the *witneſs of the Spirit*, according to the na-

ture of all teſtimony, can be only a moral cauſe or motive of believing; and, therefore, whatever elſe it ſignifies, can never denote ſuch an impulſe upon the mind as ſuperſedes the uſe of Reaſon in believing. Whenever any thing is believed upon the teſtimony of ſome perſon aſſerting the truth of it, that teſtimony is the reaſon, or motive, of believing it; whereas, in this caſe, we are ſuppoſed to believe without any argument, or motive at all; that, which they call *the teſtimony of the Spirit*, not being the motive by which we are induced to believe as rational and moral agents, but the phyſical cauſe of Faith; that is, ſuch a cauſe as owns no part of its efficacy to the rational proofs of Chriſtianity; not even thoſe, that are deduced from the ſuperior excellency of the Chriſtian doctrine, and the ſeal of miracles affixed to it; which we find, in the Hiſtory of the *New Teſtament*, were the things that brought the world to believe in Chriſt.

The ſame Faith may, in different reſpects, be ſtiled *divine*, *rational*, and *human*. It hath the name of *divine* Faith, for the reaſons above-mentioned. When it is conſidered as the effect of arguments, that are fitted to convince any ſerious and impartial perſon, it may be called a *rational* Faith; and as far as it reſts upon the *teſtimony of the Apoſtles*, as men qualified to *bear witneſs*

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to Christ, [r] *having been with him from the beginning*; and who gave the best proof of their integrity, by suffering for the truth; upon the agreement of all, enemies as well as friends in acknowledging many of the principal facts upon which Christianity is founded; particularly, the *miracles* of Christ and his Apostles; and, finally, upon the testimonies of the primitive Writers, concerning the genuineness of the Books of the *New Testament*; or their being wrote by the Persons whose names they bear; and the universal tradition of the Christian Church: so far I say, as Faith rests upon this foundation, it may be termed *human*, as well as *rational*. Nor is it any dishonour to the Christian's Faith, that it is *human* and *rational*, as well as *divine*; for, having made us men, God treats us as such in every dispensation of Religion; and cannot be supposed to have given us reasons for believing, of a *human* and *rational* kind, for any other end and purpose, but that we should consider them, and be influenced by them.

The other distinction relates to the *Doctrines* which are the subject matter of the Gospel-Revelation; some of which we receive upon the testimony both of *Reason* and *Revelation*; others upon that of *Revelation* only. That there is but one God; that God made the world, not many thousand

[r] John xv. 27.

years ago; is reconcileable to ſinners; and exerciſes a more ſpecial, and gracious Providence over good men; and that there is a future ſtate, when he will call the children of men to account, and reward and puniſh them according as they have done good or evil. Theſe are truths which the *Reaſon* of mens minds dictates to them; though not with all that clearneſs and authority that accompany them in the way of *Revelation:* which, very probably, is one ground of God's having made known the ſame things more fully by the light of *Revelation*, which were known in a leſs perfect manner and degree, by the light of *Nature*. And we are to give the firmer credit, and the more earneſt heed to theſe things, becauſe God hath been pleaſed to vouchſafe us this ſupernatural diſcovery of them. There are other things which are known only by *Revelation*; and, conſequently, are believed purely upon the credit of that. Of this kind are all thoſe that belong to the mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, and the method of our ſalvation by him. Theſe truths may be termed *ſupernatural*, becauſe the way of diſcovering them is wholly ſuch.

This diſtinction between truths diſcovered both by *Reaſon* and *Revelation*, and others diſcovered by *Revelation* only, may be illuſtrated from the 11th Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, where we are told, that *he that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is*

is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him; and further, that *by Faith Noah, being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe*; and that *by Faith Abraham* alſo, *when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed*; *and went out not knowing whither he went*; after which, follow other inſtances of the ſame kind. Now, that God was going to bring a univerſal deluge upon the earth, in which all fleſh would be deſtroyed excepting *Noah* and his Family; and that the Land of *Canaan* was to be inherited by the poſterity of *Abraham*; theſe good men could have no other reaſon for believing, but the *Word* of God aſſuring them that ſo it would be; but, that they who ſerve God faithfully, ſhall receive ſuitable marks of his favour, they had a great deal of reaſon to think, not only becauſe the mouth of the Lord had ſpoken it, but becauſe ſo much might be inferred from the natural notions of God, if they conſulted them.

Beſides theſe two ſorts of truths, one of which depends upon *Revelation* only, the other both upon *Reaſon* and *Revelation*, there is a third ſort which (to ſpeak properly) derive no part of their evidence from the authority of *Revelation*, but reſt intirely upon *Reaſon* and *Experience*. As for inſtance, *that God is*, which he that cometh to him muſt

believe, and *that God is true.* The reaſon of our believing theſe things cannot be, that God hath revealed them; ſince our believing any thing that God hath revealed, is wholly to be reſolved into an antecedent perſuaſion, that there is ſuch a Being as God, with whoſe honour it is abſolutely inconſiſtent, that he ſhould deceive his creatures. And, though we may be further confirmed in the belief of the Being of God from ſupernatural operations, and of his veracity from the fulfilment of Prophecies, yet it is plain, that, in theſe caſes, our Faith is founded in the *Works* of God, and not at all in the authority of his *Word.*

To compleat the notion of *Saving Faith.*

v. This perſuaſion, concerning the truth of the Goſpel, and the things contained therein, muſt be ſuch as to ingage the Chriſtian to chuſe and act ſuitably to the nature and importance of the things revealed to him, and believed by him. That Faith is not a chriſtian grace, which hath not all other virtues and graces attending in its train. The *Saint* and the *Believer* are, in this ſenſe, one and the ſame perſon. Is Faith required? So is Repentance too. [r] *Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.* [s] *Teſtifying to the* Jews, *and alſo to the* Greeks, *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And that no room might be left for miſtake (as to the thing meant by Repentance) the Apoſtle *Paul,* not only tells his hearers, that *they muſt repent and*

[r] Mark i. 15. [s] Acts xx. 21.

and turn unto God, but that [u] *they must do works meet for Repentance*. And, writing to the *Romans*, he puts them in mind, that [w] *they were buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so they also should walk in newness of life*. Does the same Apostle say, that [x] *a man is justified by Faith without the deeds of the Law?* Another Apostle says, as expressly, that [y] *by works a man is justified, and not by Faith only*. So that if we would make the Apostle *Paul* consistent with himself, and other inspired Writers, we must not imagine him, by *works*, to have meant works of *evangelical* righteousness; but the *works* of the Law of *Moses*, which the unbelieving *Jews* thought sufficient without Faith in Christ, and the Judaizing Christians esteemed to be necessary in conjunction with it; while, in truth, as it was necessary, for the obtaining salvation, that men should believe in Christ, so, if they sincerely believed the Gospel, and lived agreeably to it, it was abundantly sufficient, without the observation of the ceremonial Law.

It is not unlikely, that besides this, the Apostle might intend that there was no Law, either that of *Moses*, or of *Nature*, that promised *eternal life* to the observers of it, as the *Gospel*, or the Law of Faith, did. Perhaps

[u] Acts xxvi. 20. [w] Rom. vi. 4. [x] iii. 20.
[y] Jam. ii. 24.

haps too, he might, as ſome have thought, oppoſe *Evangelical* Righteouſneſs to *Phariſaical*; the latter of which was more in outward appearance, than in the inward man of the heart. Are we choſen to ſalvation through the *belief of the truth?* We are ſo; but not through that only, but alſo through [z] *ſanctification of the Spirit.* Is it ſaid in the text, that *the Goſpel is the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth?* In the 5th Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, ver. 9. it is ſaid, that *Chriſt is the Author of eternal ſalvation to them that obey him*; which is an evident demonſtration, that *Saving Faith* includes *obedience.* The [a] *end of the Commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conſcience and Faith unfeigned. We muſt hold Faith with a good conſcience*, ver. 19. Theſe then are the inſeparable companions of, the Faith which the Goſpel commands, even a *good conſcience*, i. e. a conſcience void of offence towards God and man; a *pure heart*, i. e. a heart freed from the prevalency of corrupt affections; and *charity*, i. e. a love to God, to Jeſus, and to our fellow men, and fellow Chriſtians, that is without diſſimulation. [b] *In Jeſus Chriſt, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but Faith that worketh by love*; and, if Faith worketh by love, it neceſſarily follows, that where love is not (love to God and man, an active labo-

[z] 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. [a] 1 Tim. i. 5. [b] Gal. v. 6.

laborious love) there is not Faith. [c] *Purifying their hearts by Faith.*

Now if this be the effect of true Faith, then it is plain, that *Evangelical* Faith and reigning luſt, are inconſiſtent things; ſince Faith purifies, but luſt defiles. Faith derives this purifying virtue from the truth which it repreſents to the mind in the moſt lively manner; [d] *Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.* In fine, Faith, if it be genuine, is victorious over all the temptations of the world. [e] *Whatſoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?* Now, unleſs a man can at the ſame time overcome the world, and be overcome by the love of it, it is clear as the light, that no one who loveth the world, ſo as to place his chief happineſs in the pleaſures and poſſeſſions of it, and for the ſake of the world to renounce his duty and allegience to God, can have that Faith which overcomes the world; and as for any other Faith which is not victorious over the world, it is worth nothing.

And, indeed, if our Faith hath not theſe properties and effects, it is by no means ſuitable to the nature and importance of the things revealed in the Goſpel, and (if we ſay true)

[c] Acts xv. 9. [d] John xvii. 17. [e] 1 John v. 4, 5.

true) firmly believed by us. For Chriſtianity is not ſo much a *ſpeculative* as *practical* ſcience; not ſo much deſigned for the information of our underſtandings (much leſs for the trial of our Faith, without inlightening our underſtandings) as for the rectifying our wills, the exaltation of our affections, and the direction of our lives. This might eaſily be made appear from a diſtinct view or examination of the whole frame of our Religion.

I ſhall content myſelf with mentioning a few of the moſt obvious things upon this head.

1. What is it we believe concerning God? Is it not, that there is no other God beſides him; a Being poſſeſt of infinite perfection, who knoweth all things, and can do all things; the wiſe and righteous Governor of the world, whoſe eyes are over the righteous, and his ears open to their cry, but whoſe face is againſt them that do evil; the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift; glorious in holineſs, and, at the ſame time, rich in mercy to all that call upon him; the firſt cauſe, and the laſt end, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, all things; finally, the Judge of all the earth, who will render to every man according as his works have been? Is not this our *belief* concerning God? It is certain it muſt be ſo, if it be conformable to Reaſon and Scripture. And what

what is the moſt natural way of arguing from ſuch a *belief* as this? Why, that we ſhould have an habitual awe and reverence of God upon our minds; worſhip him in ſpirit and truth; love him with all our heart, with all our ſoul, and with all our mind and ſtrength; walk before him to all pleaſing, doing the things that are truly good and excellent, theſe being the things that are good in his ſight; that we ſhould be holy, as our Father in heaven is holy, and merciful and perfect as he is; obey his will; put our truſt in his Providence; commit our ſouls to him in well-doing; in a word, that we ſhould be diligent that we may be found of him in peace, in the great day of account, without ſpot and blameleſs. This is the conduct to which a right *belief* in God will ingage us, in caſe we have any concern to demean ſuitably to the *nature* and *importance* of the things we believe; agreeably to St. *Paul*'s Charge to *Titus*, [f] *This is a faithful ſaying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they, who have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works.* In which words, though the Apoſtle might have a more particular eye to *works of charity*, yet the reaſon extends to every other ſort of good works, which muſt therefore be ſuppoſed to be, though not ſo directly, intended by him.

2. What

[f] Titus iii. 8.

2. What is it we believe concerning Jeſus Chriſt? Is it not, that he was in the form of God, before he was found in faſhion as a man; yet, though rich, emptied himſelf for our ſakes and became poor; that he is the beloved Son of God, by whom God ſpake unto the world; a Prophet, like unto *Moſes*, yet much greater than he; a merciful and faithful High-Prieſt in things pertaining unto God, who gave himſelf for us an offering and a ſacrifice of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works; exalted to be a Prince, as well as a Saviour, the one King and Lawgiver of the Church, who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy; lovely and excellent in his own Perſon, being holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners; who loved righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity, who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth; and one who hath loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his blood, and thereby made us Kings and Prieſts unto God; our Advocate with the Father, and the Perſon ordained to be our Judge? This being our Faith concerning Jeſus Chriſt, what is that *temper of mind*, and that *outward practice and behaviour*, which is ſuitable to this Faith?

If we would not have one of theſe to contradict the other, muſt we not indeavour that

that the ſame mind (the ſame humble, meek, contented and holy mind) be in us that was in him? Muſt we not hear ſo as to obey this great Prophet; unleſs we deſpiſe that awful threatening, that he, who heareth him not, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the people? Ought we not to glory in the croſs of Chriſt, to place our confidence in him, and to pray for, and expect, every good thing *(ſpiritual bleſſings* eſpecially) through his death and interceſſion; remembering withal, that we are to be crucified with him, and to draw near to God with a true heart, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, without which we cannot come boldly to the throne of divine Grace? Muſt we not acknowledge the authority of Jeſus, our Lord and King, by ſubmitting to it, yielding him the throne in our hearts, and bringing every thought and imagination, and deſire, into obedience to him, caſting off the reign of ſin; for as much as we cannot at once bear the yoke of ſin, and the yoke of Chriſt, be the ſervants of ſin, and the ſervants of Chriſt? Having left us an example, does he not expect that we ſhould tread in his ſteps, and love him, and one another, as he hath loved us; that is, not in word only, but indeed, and in truth? If we eſteem him for his holineſs, ſhould we not ſtrive to reſemble him in it; and prepare for our trial if we believe he will be our Judge; ſince he him-

himſelf hath told us, that *not every one, who ſaith unto him, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of his Father who is in heaven*; and that to all others he will profeſs, *I never knew you, depart from me all ye that work iniquity?*

3. What is it we believe concerning the Commands of the Goſpel? Is it not that the Goſpel hath its Commands, ſome things to be done, as well as others to be believed; and that theſe Commands make a great part of the Goſpel; that they contain, as the perfect and acceptable, ſo likewiſe the indiſpenſable will of God; injoin every thing that is good, and forbid every thing that is evil; require purity of heart, and holineſs of converſation; oblige us to deny ourſelves, to overcome the world, to forgive our enemies, and to do good for evil; and yet all this, notwithſtanding, are not to be reckoned grievous? That the moral Law is eternal, and, inſtead of being repealed by the Goſpel, is explained by it in its higheſt and nobleſt ſenſe, and ſet home by additional inforcements? In fine, that the Goſpel, which is the Grace of God, hath taught us, *denying all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent evil world?* And is it not a flat contradiction to ſay, that we believe all this, and at the ſame time, to contend that nothing more is neceſſary than

barely

barely believing it? For what elſe is this but ſaying, that the ſame thing is neceſſary, and is not neceſſary; and that we believe both ends of the contradiction; that without holineſs, no man ſhall ſee the face of the Lord, and yet that Faith ſhall be accepted inſtead of holineſs? No man can more plainly give up his own cauſe, and condemn himſelf, than every man does, who, at the ſame time that he breaks the Commands of Scripture, profeſſes to believe them all; he believes, he knows, this and that to be his Maſter's will, but does it not. And can he then reaſonably hope to eſcape? Will his Faith ſave him? On the contrary, this is the very thing that will render him worthy of ſorer puniſhment, of more ſtripes, that *he knew his Lord's will, and did it not.*

4. What is it we believe concerning the Sanctions of the divine Law, or the Promiſes and Threatenings of the Goſpel? Is it not that God will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, and honour and immortality, eternal life—but to them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh, upon every ſoul of man that doth evil; there being no reſpect of perſons with God? Is it not that the unrighteous (or wicked perſons ſuch as fornicators, thieves, covetous, drunkards,

ards, revilers, extortioners, and the like) ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? Are not the Promiſes of the Goſpel as inviting, as the Threatenings of it are terrible? Do we not believe that God hath promiſed the forgiveneſs of ſin, the aids and comforts of the Holy Spirit, the reſurrection of the body, and life and bleſſedneſs everlaſting? And why hath God given us theſe exceeding great and precious Promiſes, but that by them we might be partakers of a divine nature; having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt? And to what purpoſe do we know the terrors of the Lord, if we do not flee from the wrath to come? Can things be of greater importance to us than theſe? Are they not of infinite importance, ſo as to make all the things of this world appear but as trifles compared with them? But is a behaviour that ſhews us to be regardleſs of theſe momentous and everlaſting things ſuitable to the acknowledged importance of them? Do we not believe that all the Promiſes and Threatenings of the Goſpel are conditional, or annexed to different kinds of behaviour? And, believing this, can we act a conſiſtent part, if we do not conſtantly avoid thoſe things againſt which the Threatenings of the Goſpel are leveled, and practiſe thoſe to which the Promiſes of it are made?

From this brief repreſentation of the things, about which Faith is converſant, you ſee the nature

nature and importance of them; and that our Faith cannot be *evangelical*, if it does not ingage us to a holy life; this alone being ſuitable to the nature and importance of theſe things. If we do not lead ſuch a life, all that we ſhall get by our Faith is only to be ſelf condemned.

I have been the larger upon theſe things, not becauſe they are not as plain as any truths in the Goſpel can be, but becauſe mens unwillingneſs to part with their ſins, hath made them raiſe diſputes about ſome of the plaineſt things in the world; and indeavour to ſubſtitute ſomewhat elſe in the room of that inward univerſal righteouſneſs and goodneſs which is the Scripture-qualification for happineſs.

I would return a few words in anſwer to two *Objections* which may ſeem to lie againſt the explication that hath been now given of Saving Faith.

1. The firſt relates to the *object* of Saving Faith, which in the forgoing definition is the *Goſpel* of Chriſt, and not his *Perſon*.

I freely acknowledge, that the definitions of Faith frequently run in this ſtyle, of *receiving Chriſt*, and *reſting upon him*; and that theſe, and many others of a like kind are either Scripture expreſſions, or ſeem to be countenanced by them. But then, it is fit we ſhould obſerve that *believing in a perſon*, and *believing what that perſon ſays*, or

ſomewhat that is ſaid *concerning him*, do in Scripture language ſignify the very ſame thing. [f] *Receiving Chriſt, and believing on his name*, is the ſame as [g] *believing his words*; [h] *believing in Chriſt* is explained, ver. 27. by believing this particular propoſition, or truth, concerning him, that *he is the Chriſt, the Son of God, who ſhould come to judge the world.* When *Paul* and *Silas* tell the Jailor (in anſwer to the queſtion, [i] *What he ſhould do to be ſaved)* that he ſhould *believe on the Lord Jeſus, and he ſhould be ſaved, and his houſe*, they required no other Faith of him, than that which the *Eunuch* profeſt, when he ſaid, *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God.* And the reaſon of this promiſcuous uſe of ſuch expreſſions is plain, namely, that the thing meant by *believing in God* and *Chriſt*, is believing ſomething or other relating to them. For what elſe is *believing in God*, but believing that God is the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, juſt, faithful and good; in ſhort, every thing that his Word declares him to be? What is it to *come to Chriſt*, to *receive Chriſt*, and to *reſt upon him*, but to believe that he is an all-ſufficient Mediator, compaſſionate and faithful, in whom all the promiſes of God are *yea*, and *amen*, *to the Glory of the Father*; ſo to believe and conſider this, as to

[f] John i. 12. [g] John v. 47. [h] John xi. 25.
[i] Acts xvi. 31.

to venture our ſouls upon it, and to reſign ourſelves up to the direction of Chriſt in his Word? So that, in this reſpect, there is no real difference, whether we make *Chriſt himſelf*, or the *Goſpel of Chriſt*, the object of Faith; the Scripture ſometimes does *one*, ſometimes the *other*, ſtill meaning the ſame thing by both manners of expreſſion. But then, I chuſe to repreſent *the thing revealed* as the object of Faith, rather than the *Revealer*; becauſe this notion of Faith is more plain and intelligible, and not ſo liable to be abuſed as the other, of which an ill uſe hath been too often made.

Every one preſently apprehends what is meant by believing the Goſpel, and may be ſoon convinced, that, ſince it is altogether proper that our Faith ſhould be ſuitable to the nature of the thing believed, our Faith therefore muſt be a practical thing, as the Goſpel is. But when Faith is continually deſcibed by terms that immediately reſpect the Perſon of Chriſt, which for the greater part of them, are *metaphorical* and *figurative*, it is not ſo much to be wondered, if thoſe who have an averſion to the practice of godlineſs, drop the conſideration of the nature and deſign of the Goſpel, and the neceſſity of obeying its holy precepts, and fancy they can make up for all this, by expreſſing an extraordinary regard to the *Perſon* of their Saviour; by which means, their

very reliance upon Chriſt (being a quite different thing from what the Scripture intends) inſtead of ſaving them, unhappily contributes to their ruin.

It is further reaſonable to think, that if ſome ſuch plain definition of Faith as this, viz. *its being a perſuaſion of the truth of the Goſpel, productive of obedience to it*, had been uſually given, and ſo great a fondneſs had not been diſcovered for *metaphorical* expreſſions, and ſo much ſtreſs laid upon them, many of the queſtions relating to Faith, and *Juſtification* by Faith, had never been heard of; which would have been very happy for the Chriſtian Church; as particularly, concerning Faith itſelf, whether the difference between *Common* and *Saving* Faith be *ſpecific*, or only *gradual*; and, concerning *Juſtification* by Faith, *how it is that* Faith *juſtifies?* As for the controverſy about the difference between *Common* and *Saving* Faith, whether it be a difference of *kind*, or only of *degree*, it ſeems to me capable of being eaſily decided, upon the principles now laid down.

Let us conſider Faith as the minds aſſent to truth, and we ſhall find it hard to conceive of any other poſſible difference but in *degree*, in reſpect to the act itſelf of *believing*. The perſuaſion the *good Chriſtian* hath of the great truths of Religion may be *ſtronger* and more *deeply rooted*, than that of the *wicked man*, but is an act of the ſame kind; the

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general nature of assent to any truth is the same, by *whomsoever* that assent is given, whether he be a good man, or a bad. Consider Faith as including *love* and *obedience*, and then, perhaps, in a *popular way of speaking*, we may be allowed to say, the Faith of the regenerate, and the unregenerate man differ in *kind*; virtue and vice, holiness and unholiness, being opposite characters. But even here, after we have looked more narrowly into the thing, we shall be sensible of its being more proper to say, that the difference is only *gradual*. Many a man, under the influence of Faith, hath inclinations to that which is good, and resolutions of leading a devout and religious life, which are very sincere as far as they go, and not without a visible effect; but then, these good resolutions and inclinations are too weak to vanquish those vitious habits, to which the man is inslaved. In this case, let him that can tell me the difference between such inclinations and resolutions, and those of the religious man, except it be in the *degree of strength*; both are *sincere*, both regard the same *object*, only in one they are *prevailing*, in the other *not*. Nor is this a small difference, since it gives one of these men an infinite advantage over the other. Was the difference between *Common* and *Saving* Faith in the *whole kind*, as some will have it, the consequence would be, that all that passes in the heart of the *convinced* sinner, and all

the good impreſſions that are made upon him, till the ſpirit hath carried the victory over the fleſh, are no part of converſion; that converſion is not a work of time, but inſtantaneous; and all the previous acts and exerciſes of repentance and mortification are of no uſe, in the nature of things, to beget the habits of holineſs: which are ſuch abſurdities as men could never run into, did they not wrap this ſubject in *metaphors*, and thereby darken and perplex it.

As to that other queſtion—*How Faith juſtifies*—there had been little room for it, but from the ſame cauſe; for if Faith be nothing elſe but ſuch a perſuaſion of the Goſpel as hath a ſuitable effect upon the heart and life, how can it juſtify but as the beſt thing we are capable of preforming; which therefore, of his infinite wiſdom and free grace, through the mediation of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, God is pleaſed mercifully to accept and reward, inſtead of that perfect and unfining obedience to the law of God which is not in our power? Whereas, when Faith is only conſidered as terminating on the Perſon of Chriſt, then men are apt to imagine they have ſufficient ground for contending, that Faith doth not juſtify as a *work* done by us, or the *condition* of the divine acceptance, but only as *uniting us to Chriſt*; and thereby making his *righteouſneſs*, by exchange, to become ours, ſo as to be not only the meritorious or procuring cauſe,

cauſe, but the immediate foundation, and, as it were, *matter* of our juſtification. And thus a plain doctrine of the Goſpel is turned into one that, at beſt, is myſterious and unintelligible; which, in my opinion, when a plainer is to be had, is no commendation of it.

Another obvious advantage of the preceeding definition is, that it doth not limit the object of Faith, as thoſe definitions do which confine it to the Perſon of Chriſt. *Faith is a reſting upon Chriſt for ſalvation.* This is very true. But is this all? Doth not Faith alſo, and even primarily, regard the ſupreme dominion, and infinite perfections of God, and reſt upon them; particularly, upon his mercy and faithfulneſs? Or is the virtue and acceptableneſs of Faith wholly derived from the reſpect it hath to *Jeſus Chriſt?* No one that underſtands, and thinks ſoberly of the matter, will venture to ſay ſo. I am far from charging the perſons, who have defined Faith after this manner, with a deſign to rob God of any part of his glory; I make no doubt of their intention to refer all to him, as the *Firſt Cauſe:* but the queſtion is not concerning the goodneſs of their intention, but the effect; which, I fear, hath too often been, that people have not ſo directly, and conſtantly thought, as they ſhould have done, of *God the Father*, as the ſupreme original fountain and author of mercy; who,

of his own good pleaſure, without needing to be ſollicited by any other perſon, decreed the ſalvation of mankind, to the praiſe of the glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

11. The next *Objection* comes from another quarter. Some then may be ready to object, that the former account of Faith is very imperfect, becauſe it mentions ſo little of the *rational grounds* and *motives* of Faith; whereas, ſay they, a man ought not only to believe that the Goſpel, or Chriſtian Religion, is true, but to be able to prove it ſo; and hardly deſerves the name of a Chriſtian if he cannot. Now I own it highly proper for thoſe, who have abilities and opportunity for it, to make themſelves maſters of the principal arguments, by which the truth of the Chriſtian Religion is eſtabliſhed, againſt the attacks of unbelievers. Nor ſhould common Chriſtians ſatisfy themſelves in being intirely ignorant, or having only a very confuſed and general notion, of them; and that they are very much to be commended, who, having examined into the foundations of their Faith, are prepared to give an anſwer to every man, that aſketh them a reaſon of the hope that is in them, with meekneſs and fear. Such perſons, ſuppoſing them as careful to underſtand and practiſe their Religion, as they are to acquaint themſelves with the reaſons of it, are a greater credit

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and ornament to the cauſe they have eſpouſed, and likely to receive more pleaſure and ſatisfaction from it themſelves. But then, however deſireable this may be, and how much ſoever it may add to the perfection of the Chriſtian's Faith, it cannot be ſaid to be of the *eſſence* of it; and therefore ought not to make any part of its definition, which ſhould only comprehend thoſe things which are neceſſary to it.

Let us ſuppoſe a perſon to have the Faith before deſcribed, ſo as to have a competent knowledge of all the important truths of the Goſpel, and to be conſtantly influenced by them in the courſe of his life and converſation, but not to have been ſo well inſtructed in the grounds of his Faith, can we think that ſuch a one labours under an eſſential defect; or even a defect by which the affair of his ſalvation is rendered dubious? I cannot think ſo. He hath that *diſpoſition of mind*, which is the only thing that can make any man's inquiries into the reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion acceptable to God, *viz.* the *love of the truth*, that *good and honeſt heart*, which, if he had lived when the Religion of Chriſt was firſt publiſhed, would have inclined him to yield to the evidences of its truth, though he was not educated in it; as the ſame temper carries him to prize and reliſh it, now that he hath been brought up in the belief of it.

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He hath the knowledge of the truths themſelves, which is the moſt neceſſary thing, though not of the rational proofs of them, which is not of equal importance; and (which crowns all the reſt) the great deſign of all the Revelations of God to mankind, and particularly of the Goſpel-Inſtitution, is accompliſhed in him; he is taught by what he believes, to fear and to love God, to be juſt and charitable, and temperate, to prefer the happineſs of the ſoul to that of the body, and to be more intent upon preparing for another world than to get and injoy this. And where Faith hath ſuch a divine operation, it is certainly a very commendable thing, and may be regarded as the offspring of heaven.

Nor is it juſt to put ſuch Chriſtians upon a level with *Heathens* and *Mahometans*, becauſe each of them adheres to the Religion he was trained up in. At worſt, the *Chriſtian* hath no reaſon to ſuſpect the truth of the Religion which his Parents have taught him, as the *Heathen* and *Mahometan* have to call in queſtion the truth of theirs. Nay, he hath a great deal of reaſon, from the miracles related in the Books of the *New Teſtament*, which have the evident marks of credibility, from the intrinſick excellence of the Chriſtian Religion, (which is a ſort of ſtamp of the Divinity upon it) and from the effects which its principles have had upon him, reforming his life, purifying his nature, and raiſing

raiſing his affections, to conclude that it is from God. And, therefore, if he reſts in it as ſuch, without any further inquiry, his cannot be called a blind implicit Faith, and looked upon as the mere effect of prejudice and obſtinacy, as theirs may, who continue in a Religion that is manifeſtly falſe, that does not pretend to miracles, or is ſupported by miracles that can impoſe upon none but ſuch as will not ſee; finally, a Religion adapted to corrupt mankind rather than to reform them, to make them worſe than they naturally are rather than better; which is the caſe of *Mahometiſm*, and *Heatheniſm*, and even of *Popery*, as diſtinct from, and contrary to, *Primitive Chriſtianity*.

II. I now proceed to conſider what we may ſuppoſe the reaſons to have been, that every thing neceſſary to be done in order to obtain everlaſting ſalvation, by Jeſus Chriſt, is in the Goſpel, ſo often repreſented and compriſed under the ſingle term of *believing*.

If we have attended to the things before ſpoken, we muſt be all of us ſenſible that Faith, abſtractly conſidered, or as an act of the underſtanding only, hath nothing in it praiſe-worthy, nothing that can intitle us to happineſs, or qualify us for it; and that, therefore, God requires of us, beſides this, a penitent humble heart, a good conſcience, a will obedient and reſigned to his, and affections ſet upon things above. And ſince this

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is ſo, that Faith, ſeparated from all the fruits and effects of Faith, is of ſo little worth and conſideration, the *queſtion* is, why the word *Faith* or *believing* is ſo frequently uſed in Scripture to expreſs the intire condition of ſalvation; the bare act of *believing* being but one thing, among many, that are neceſſary to this end? Of this, the following probable account may be given.

1. Faith is, in the nature of things, antecedent to, or before, Practice; is in order to it, and only to be diſcovered and judged of, in the natural way of conſtruction, and with any certainty, by it; and for this reaſon, probably, is uſed ſo as to include the practical part of Religion.

In the nature of things, Faith is before Practice. [k] *That the ſoul be without knowledge, it is not good*; this is the obſervation of the wiſe man; the truth of which cannot be conteſted; the relation between *knowing* our duty, and *doing* it, being much the ſame as between *ſeeing* our way, and *walking* in it: ſo that a blind man will not be more apt to wander out of his way, than the ignorant man deviate from the rule of righteouſneſs that is preſcribed him. What *Solomon* here ſays of *knowledge* may, with equal reaſon, be applied to Faith. It cannot be expected that a perſon, who does not believe this and that to be his duty, will be concerned

[k] Prov. xix. 2.

cerned to do it; as upon ſuppoſition he did it, not believing it to be his duty, he would not deſerve any praiſe or reward thereby; that which is good in itſelf, not being good to that man who does it not of Faith. And indeed Faith, as far as it is reaſonable, implies knowledge; knowledge of the things we believe, and of ſome grounds and reaſons for believing. Is it not neceſſary, that a man ſhould believe the truth of the Goſpel, before he makes the precepts of it the rule of his life and converſation; or can be at all moved and influenced by its ſtrongeſt motives? The Goſpel to one, who does not believe its heavenly original, can be of no more uſe than if it was a mere human compoſure, not a divine Revelation. This ſhews that, without Faith, the heart cannot be good any more than without knowledge; there muſt be ſome Faith, and ſome knowledge, be it only obſcure and general, or there can be no Chriſtianity. Now this being the caſe, that Faith is thus antecedent to Practice, the leading act of Religion, hence it was, that *believing* the Goſpel, ſo as to imbrace the profeſſion of it, came to ſignify a man's becoming a Chriſtian *in truth*, as well as *in name*; in like manner, as it is not unuſual, in Scripture, to expreſs the whole of a good life by ſome one eminent part and principle of it, ſuch as the *knowledge*, or *fear*, or *love*, of God.

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The reaſon of this is ſtill more evident, if we conſider that Faith, as it is in the nature of things before Practice, ſo is apparently in order to it, and borrows its chief value from its ſubſerviency to promote a life of true, univerſal goodneſs. That glorious Being, who is the fountain of all truth, could not but intend, in communicating the light of truth to the world, that all who are capable of beholding this light ſhould be guided and governed by it; otherwiſe truth would be no better than error. And when Chriſt and his Apoſtles propoſed, and publiſhed the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and did all they could to bring men to the belief of it, all that attended upon their preaching, muſt underſtand this to be their great aim, to perſuade men to receive the Goſpel as that, from which they were, for the future, to take the principles, the rules, and the end of all their actions. And accordingly, they that made profeſſion of the Goſpel, deſigned no other than to oblige themſelves, by that profeſſion, to live agreeably to it; every man's own Reaſon naturally ſuggeſting this to him, that his believing any true Propoſition, is in order to his being affected and influenced by it, according to the nature of the Propoſition believed; which was further intimated by the nature and deſign of *Chriſtian Baptiſm*, which was looked upon as a promiſe of the perſon deſiring Baptiſm to die unto ſin, and live unto righteouſneſs; to renounce all the cri-

criminal delights and cuſtoms of the world, and to devote himſelf to a new converſation.

And that which carries the reaſon ſtill higher is, that as Faith is antecedent to Practice, and in order to it, ſo it can only be diſcovered and judged of, in the natural way of conſtruction, and with any certainty, by it. Every man is inwardly conſcious to his own belief, but no man can diſcern another man's Faith, while it proceeds no further than the heart. If I believe in my heart only, that is only to God and my own conſcience. And therefore Faith muſt not reſt here, but come into the view and obſervation of the world, that ſo God may be glorified, and men edified by it. But now, not to aſk, how God is glorified by a Faith that is unfruitful, I only demand how men ſhall know that we do believe? Only by our ſaying that we do? On the contrary, will not the perpetual contradiction of our lives to the truth be a better evidence, in the natural conſtruction of things, that we do not really, or at leaſt thoroughly, believe it, than all our merely verbal profeſſions are that we do?

It is a maxim in the *Civil Law*, that *no Proteſtation is to be regarded againſt Fact.* It is upon this principle, that the Apoſtle *Paul* paſſeth ſentence on ſome bad men, [1] *They profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny*

[1] Tit. i. 16.

deny him, being abominable, and diſobedient, and to every good work reprobate. It is in vain to own in words what we deny in our actions. Faith doth, as it were, render itſelf viſible in a conſtant, uniform courſe of pious and good actions; and, in this language, ſpeaks ſo as to be underſtood alike by all mankind; for *the tree is known by its fruits.* Whereas, mere words, as they are no proper evidence of our Faith, ſo they have no meaning at all to perſons of another language, to whom we had as good ſay nothing. This will explain that paſſage of the Apoſtle. [m] *Yea, a man may ſay, thou haſt Faith, and I have works; ſhew me thy Faith without thy works, and I will ſhew thee my Faith by my works.* It is but to conſider this as a challenge to the *Solifidian* (or *mere believer*) to give the world a ſatisfactory proof of his Faith, and then the reaſoning will be very clear, which otherwiſe doth not lie ſo plain. In the 11th ver. the Apoſtle ſays, that *Faith if it hath not works, is dead, being alone*; that is, though we ſhould grant that a man hath Faith, yet his Faith, if it be without works, is a uſeleſs, lifeleſs principle. Then it immediately follows *yea, a man may ſay*, that is, any good man, may ſay, to him who hath Faith without works, *thou haſt Faith, and I have works* (thou *ſayeſt*, perhaps, *boaſteſt*, that thou haſt Faith, while thou *ſeeſt*

[m] Jam. ii. 18.

ſeeſt that I have *works*) *ſhew me thy Faith without thy works*, ſhew it me if thou canſt; what other ſolid, convincing proof canſt thou give me of thy *Faith*, while *this* is wanting? I will therefore leave thee to thy *labour in vain*, and take the ſhorteſt and moſt effectual way to ſhew thee my *Faith*, which is by my *works*; I will labour to convince thee, and the reſt of the world, by my life and actions, that I am well perſuaded of the truth of that holy Religion I profeſs.

But do not we generally ſuppoſe that men believe as they profeſs, though their profeſſion, and their lives, run counter one to the other? We do ſo. But then, this is not from any evidence, that mere words carry in them, of a man's ſincerity, but from other cauſes; as *partly*, from the ſuperior excellence of virtue and piety, which we are ready to think is ſo apparent, that there is no one, be he who he will, but he muſt have ſome conviction of it; *partly*, from every man's having experienced more or leſs in his own particular caſe, that intereſt, paſſion and inclination, have prevailed on him to do, what his own mind diſapproved and condemned; *partly*, from thoſe ſigns of repentance which wicked men do ſometimes diſcover; and *partly*, from their doing many things in Religion, perhaps all that are conſiſtent with their continuing under the dominion of ſin: from theſe, and ſuch like

cauſes, we are inclined to think that wicked men believe as they profeſs, not as they practiſe; not from any evidence that a bare profeſſion will afford, in itſelf conſidered. And after all, the aſſurance we have of a man's believing the whole, and every part of Chriſtianity, who exemplifies every part of it in the courſe of a holy and virtuous life, is very different from the conceſſion we make of another's explicitly believing all the ſame things, whoſe manner of life would naturally lead one to ſuppoſe the quite contrary of him.

This is the *firſt* reaſon, why the intire condition of ſalvation is expreſſed by this ſingle term of *believing*; Faith, or Believing, is before Practice, in order to it, and only to be diſcovered and judged of, in the natural way of conſtruction, and with any certainty, by it.

11. Conſidering the ſtate and circumſtances of the world, at the firſt publication of the Goſpel, there were particular reaſons for ſuppoſing that they, who believed and imbraced it, did ſo with a reſolution of living in a conſtant and total conformity to it; which if they did, they had all the aſſurance the Goſpel could give them of their being finally ſaved. And this is another reaſon of this uſe of the term *believing*, ſo as to ſignify not only the bare act of *believing*, but likewiſe ſuch a manner of converſation as

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one might reaſonably expect would be conſequent upon it. The firſt believers of the Goſpel were perſons who had been brought up in the prejudices of another Religion; and by the profeſſion they made of the Goſpel, expoſed themſelves to a great many certain inconveniencies, as well as to the danger of death itſelf.

1. They had been brought up in the prejudices of another Religion; the *Jews* of the Religion of *Moſes*, and the *Heathens* of their ſeveral Superſtitions. And when, notwithſtanding all theſe prejudices, they forſook the way of their fathers, and took up the profeſſion of a new Religion ſo very different from all others, and that exacted ſuch ſelf-denial and mortification, ſuch a ſtrictneſs and holineſs of behaviour from all the profeſſors of it, as the Chriſtian Religion did, it might juſtly be concluded, that they did it upon a full conviction of its truth, and a ſincere diſpoſition, and purpoſe of heart, to walk worthy of it; ſince otherwiſe they might very well reaſon with themſelves, they had as good remain as they were; or better, than only change notions without any change at all in the affections of their minds, or their external practice; and therefore they would have refuſed to come under the obligations of ſuch a Faith, if they had had no intention to comply with them: which hath been actu-

ally the reaſon, given by ſome, for not profeſſing the Goſpel, that they did not find themſelves diſpoſed to live as the Goſpel directed, and therefore would not have any thing to do with it. And, after this manner, we may conceive a great part of thoſe, who rejected the Goſpel at the firſt preaching of it, to have argued. They were by education *Jews*, or *Heathens*, and this was reaſon ſufficient for not turning Chriſtians, ſince they could not find in their hearts to live as Chriſtians acknowledged themſelves obliged to do. Conſequently, when perſons broke the bonds of former opinions and cuſtoms in ſunder, and ſurrendered themſelves to the evidences of the Chriſtian Doctrine, ſo far as publickly to profeſs their belief of the truth of this Doctrine, notwithſtanding its known contrariety to every corrupt principle and practice; what can we think, but that they were determined to follow their new Maſter in the way of holineſs and obedience, which he taught them both by his precepts and example? And what leſs could be hoped and expected, but that they would not eaſily forget their promiſes and reſolutions, or be prevailed on to act contrary to them? Eſpecially when it is conſidered,

2. That, by the open profeſſion of the Goſpel, the firſt believers knew they ſhould expoſe themſelves to a great many certain in-

inconveniencies, as well as to the danger of death itself.

These being the only prospects which even a slight consideration of things would give them, and which the Preachers of the Gospel did actually set before them; telling them that they must be in a readiness to take up their cross, and through many tribulations must enter into the kingdom of God, and that there was no becoming the disciples of Christ upon easier terms; surely, the professors of the Gospel must needs be in earnest, thoroughly persuaded of the truth of Christianity, and thoroughly resolved to abide by the profession and practice of it, whatsoever it should cost them. And both these things together (I mean the prejudices of a former Religion, and the inconveniences suffered, or feared, by the followers of this new one) will account for those promises which we find made to the confession of the truth. [n] *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven.* [o] *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Not that there is any righteousness in an idle belief, or any hope of salvation belonging to a bare verbal con-

[n] Mat. x. 32. [o] Rom. x. 9. 10.

feſſion of the truth; but at that time there was ground to preſume, that if men believed the Goſpel againſt all the prejudices of education, and continued firm in the profeſſion of their Faith in defiance of all dangers and diſtreſſes, their Faith was ſomething more than a light empty notion floating in the brain, even a vital governing principle.

And it is only upon this ſuppoſition, that there is any reward promiſed to the belief of the truth, or even to the boldeſt and moſt conſtant confeſſion of it; ſince though a man ſhould make a voluntary ſacrifice of his life for the ſake of the Goſpel, not being really a good man, he would fall ſhort of the crown of martyrdom. This caſe is already decided by the Apoſtle *Paul*. [p] *Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity* (that love of God and man, of truth and holineſs, which the Goſpel requires) *it profiteth me nothing*. The flame that conſumes my body, will not purify my ſoul from its moral defilements, nor ſupply the want of divine love, that holy fire in which my ſoul ſhould aſcend to God.

This is the *ſecond* reaſon for comprizing the whole condition of ſalvation under the ſingle term of *believing*, *viz.* That the circumſtances of the world were ſuch at that time, when the Goſpel was firſt preached, that there was more than ordinary ground to take it for granted that they, who believed and

[p] 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

and imbraced it, did it with a resolution of living in conformity to it; having been brought up in the prejudices of a former Religion, and by the profession they made of the Gospel, exposing themselves to a great many certain inconveniences, as well as to the danger of death itself.

III. The natural and manifest tendency of the Doctrine of the Gospel, being firmly believed, and seriously laid to heart, to ingage men to a life of holiness and obedience, is another reason why Faith stands for the sum of Practical Christianity.

The excellency of the knowledge of Christ in this respect (or the great reasonableness of the precepts of the Gospel, and the attractive beauty of a life adorned with every grace and virtue) must have a very considerable effect upon all thinking and ingenuous minds. All those to whom a thing approves itself the more for being right and congruous, and who think it the glory of an Institution, that it is consonant to the highest and purest Reason; all such cannot but have the greatest esteem of the Gospel on this account, and be so pleased with such a draught or description of true undefiled Religion, as to have a desire to substantiate it, (if I may be allowed the expression) and from the idea or picture of it in the Scriptures, and in their own minds, to copy it out into their lives.

A like impreſſion will be made by the contemplation of thoſe exalted patterns of holineſs that the Goſpel exhibits, in God himſelf, the moſt excellent and adoreable of all Beings, and in that lovely and beloved image of God, his only begotten Son; in whom, as in a glaſs, or poliſhed mirror, beholding that holineſs which is the true glory of the Deity, and indeed of every intelligent nature, we are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory.

Where theſe fail, for want of an underſtanding to diſcern the abſolute intrinſick excellence of the precepts and examples of the Goſpel, the Goſpel hath other ways of taking hold of the minds of men. Have they any ſeeds of gratitude in their temper? Is there that within them which prompts them to be mindful of benefits, and to love their benefactors? Are they to be ſubdued by kindneſs; and, having offended another, are they brought to confeſs their fault, and to be heartily ſorry for it, when they find the party offended to be of a generous nature, diſpoſed not merely to paſs by the offence, but to do them good for evil? What a mighty force and efficacy then muſt ſuch perſons perceive in thoſe conſiderations which the Goſpel abounds with, taken from the goodneſs and mercy of God, and the love of Jeſus? How can they reſiſt the argument for a holy life, when they are intreated by the

the mercies of God to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is their reasonable service? How chuse but be constrained by the love of Jesus, when they thus believe and judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for them, that they, who live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again? These are the cords of a man, the bands of love, by which all who remember, and would shew themselves men, reasonable and free agents, will be effectually drawn.

But if this handle too be wanting, or singly prove too weak; if men are strangers to the sentiments of gratitude, as well as to the love and approbation of virtue for its native goodness and excellence, or feel within themselves but feeble stirings of these things; yet there are few, if any, who have not their hopes and fears, by which they are powerfully actuated. And what objects so fitted to work upon these passions as those which the Gospel proposes, if they are stedfastly believed, and duly attended to? The joys of heaven, and the torments of hell, rewards and punishments, salvation and destruction, life and death eternal? How is it that the Grace of God teaches us to [q] *deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world,*

[q] Tit. ii. 12, 13.

world, but by bringing ſalvation, and teaching us to *look for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt?* The knowledge which the faithful have, that *when abſent from the body, they ſhall be preſent with the Lord* (an expreſſion denoting the greateſt happineſs of which the ſeparate ſoul is capable, and that introductory to the compleat happineſs of the ſoul and body to Chriſt) makes them labour that, whether preſent or abſent, they may be accepted of him; being always found in the diligent and chearful diſcharge of their duty. And, [r] *knowing the terrour of the Lord (that we muſt all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil) we perſuade men*, ſaith the ſame Apoſtle: this awful conſideration of a future Judgment, and the retributions of the laſt deciding Day, makes us, the Miniſters of the Goſpel, ſollicitous to diſcharge our part and office well; and diſpoſes others to hearken to us, when we perſuade them to lead a holy and chriſtian life.

We ſee then the natural and peculiar tendency of the Goſpel-Doctrine, being believed and reflected on, to produce holineſs of converſation; which is therefore very likely to be one reaſon that ſuch a holy converſation is

[r] 2 Cor. v. 8,—11.

is included in the Scripture-notion of *believing*. Only let us obſerve, that it is all along ſuppoſed that theſe are not things which we never ſeriouſly thought of, that we do not live in a habitual forgetfulneſs of them, but attend to them, and reflect upon them. An habitual forgetfulneſs of things, is a kind of non-exiſtence of them, as to us; it is only attention and conſideration that gives them a proper being in the mind: then only do we actually believe them, when we are mindful of them, and imploy our thoughts about them; and if we do this till our minds are impreſſed by the momentous truths of Religion, and repeat ſuch thoughts ſo often as is neceſſary to preſerve the impreſſion from being effaced, it is next to impoſſible that truths, of this nature, ſhould not have a tranſforming virtue, and a ruling power.

IV. The condition of the Goſpel-Covenant is expreſſed by *believing* to diſtinguiſh the Goſpel of *Chriſt* from the Law of *Moſes*. Theſe two are of a very different nature. The legal ſervice was exceeding burthenſome, conſiſting only in meats and drinks, and divers waſhings, and carnal ordinances, impoſed on that people till the time of reſtitution; that is, till the coming of the Meſſiah, who would reſtore Religion to a more perfect ſtate. The great number of ſacrifices, purifications, and other ceremonial rites and appointments, though they anſwered very wiſe ends

ends at that time, and among that people, had no goodneſs of their own to recommend them; they were bodily exerciſes, not improvements of the mind; and, taken all together, were ſuch a yoke as the Apoſtle *Peter* (who was himſelf by birth a *Jew*) declares *neither they, nor their Fathers, were able to bear.* The heir, then being a child, differed nothing from a ſervant. The *Jews*, though the children of God, were in bondage under the elements of the world; or ſuch rudiments of Religion as had very little tendency to raiſe their thoughts and affections above the preſent world. *But when the fulneſs of time was come, God ſent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons; and becauſe we are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father*; and the Spirit of adoption, is a Spirit of freedom.

Chriſtians are exempted from thoſe ſervile works, in which the *Jews* were imployed. The ſervice which Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed, is of a more ſpiritual kind; worthy of God who is an infinite Spirit, and the Father of Spirits; perfective of the ſpiritual part of man, and every way ſuitable to our nature, as compounded Beings, and to our condition, as free-born; and is therefore ſtiled *a reaſonable ſervice.* The love of God and our neighbour,

and

and a preference of heavenly things, together with thoſe duties that naturally ſpring from ſuch affections, are not to be reckoned among the labours of the body, which are a wearineſs to the fleſh, without bringing any pleaſure to the mind; but are the operations of the ſoul, the intellectual part, which would never be tired with thoſe actions that are properly its own, never be weary in well-doing, if its diſpoſition was perfectly right, and the body did not weigh down the ſpirit. To a pure and upright ſpirit there is nothing irkſome and laborious in ſuch exerciſes. And even in this embodied ſtate, that wearineſs which is occaſioned by the infirmity of the fleſh, is abundantly recompenced by the eaſe and refreſhment of ſoul, which acts of virtue and devotion are attended with.

Upon this difference between carnal ordinances, and the acts and exerciſes of divine and brotherly love, is in great part founded the oppoſition of Faith, or the Goſpel, to the Law, or the works of the Law, ſo frequent in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*. The Goſpel having aboliſhed the neceſſity and obligation of all ſuch works as the ceremonial Law injoined, and the carnal part of the *Jews* valued moſt highly, does, in that ſenſe, require nothing but Faith, in order to a man's being juſtified and ſaved; *i. e.* Faith without ſuch works as made the chief part of the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation; not with-

without ſuch works as, being founded in the nature of God and man, and the relation betwixt both, are of eternal obligation; and no more a burthen or grievance to uncorrupted nature, than believing that to be true, which is evidently ſo, is to a clear and ſound underſtanding: which is the reaſon added by our bleſſed Saviour to his invitation to take his yoke upon our necks, and his burthen upon our ſhoulders, that *his yoke is eaſy, and his burthen is light.*

If there be any thing of a yoke, or burthen, in theſe things, our corruptions are the cauſe of it; and, after all, where the good principle prevails, the pain and difficulty of theſe things, compared with the pleaſure, are inconſiderable. Such works as theſe were not firſt commanded by the Goſpel, but are coæval with the nature of man; for as ſoon as there were men in the world, they were bound to love God and one another, and take the beſt care they were able of themſelves; not waſting their time in doing nothing, or what was worſe than nothing, or miſimploying their active faculties, or hurting their minds or bodies by intemperance of any kind. It is true, all theſe duties are more fully explained, and more ſtrongly preſſed, by the Goſpel of our Saviour, than they had ever been before; but ſtill, they were not altogether unknown in any age or part of the world; and had men made that uſe of their Reaſon and Underſtanding

derſtanding which they ought to have done, and acted up to the light and knowledge they injoyed, theſe things would have been much better known than they were.

And thus, you ſee, there was hardly any thing intirely new demanded by the Goſpel but Faith, if we except the obſervation of the two Sacraments, *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's Supper*; by one of which, men made a ſolemn declaration of their Faith; by the other, celebrated the memory of the author and finiſher of it; and by both (more eſpecially by the frequent return of the latter) had thoſe diſpoſitions cheriſhed and perfected in them, which are the ſubſtance and end of all true Religion. All this being conſidered, it was natural enough to deſcribe the condition of the Goſpel-Covenant by Faith.

The *Jews* were now no longer to exerciſe themſelves in the works of the ceremonial Law, but only to believe the Goſpel. In reſpect of the Law, they were in much the ſame condition as the ancient Patriarchs; particularly, their father *Abraham*, whoſe [f] *Faith was reckoned to him for righteouſneſs, when he was in his uncircumciſion*; ſeveral years before he was circumciſed, and ſome hundreds before the Law was given. To this ſtate they were now reſtored again. And though both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were by the Goſpel called to holineſs, yet that was no more than they were

[f] Rom. iv. 9, 10.

were obliged to before as men, creatures originally made in the image of God, and endowed with capacities to know and do his will, (he hath ſhewn thee, O man, whoſoever thou art, what is good) only now, having the benefit of the Goſpel, which had placed moral, ſpiritual, and eternal things in a much clearer light, they were to aſpire to higher degrees of perfection in all the kinds and exerciſes of real goodneſs.

This finiſhes the *ſecond* general head, or the reaſons why the whole condition of ſalvation is ſo often repreſented and compriſed under the ſingle term of *believing*; upon which I have been ſomewhat the longer, becauſe as it is a ſubject of ſome importance to give us a juſter apprehenſion of Chriſtianity, ſo it is but ſeldom conſidered.

III. The laſt thing propoſed, is to vindicate the honour of the Goſpel, in making *Faith* the condition of that great ſalvation which it promiſes, and admitting all, without diſtinction, who have this *Faith*.

The promiſe of everlaſting life and happineſs to Faith, explained as before, does not carry in it any thing inconſiſtent with the notion of a divine Revelation. Nay, it is ſo far from being inconſiſtent with ſuch a Revelation, that it is highly worthy of it, and ſuggeſts one viſible advantage of the Goſpel above the Law in the proof of its divinity.

The

The Gospel may be easily vindicated. 1. In requiring Faith as the least that will be accepted. 2. In requiring no more than Faith as necessary to our acceptance. And, 3. In making no distinction between one part of mankind and another, but laying open the Favour of God, and the blessedness of the next life, to all alike upon these terms.

1. It is very easy to vindicate the Gospel, in requiring Faith as the least that will be accepted; and that, whether we take Faith more strictly, and simply, for assent to the truth of the Gospel; or as connoting a life and conversation suitable to such an assent.

If Faith be taken in its simplest signification, for the belief of the Gospel, there is nothing hard and unreasonable in its excluding all those from the hope of salvation who have not this belief; provided, we understand this of such persons only as have had sufficient means and opportunities of acquainting themselves with the nature and design of the Gospel, and the proofs of its being a Revelation from God, and who, moreover, have not laboured under invincible prejudices, and such as they could not help: for as to others (such as *Heathens*, and persons under like incapacities with them) we may ask, in the words of the Apostle *Paul*, *How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?* Since *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* But now, when we speak of

thoſe to whom the word of this ſalvation is ſent, thoſe who lived in the times of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, or who have lived ſince in Chriſtian Countries, where it hath been eaſy to know what is pure, genuine Chriſtianity, and what is only a corruption of it, by looking into the writings of the Apoſtles themſelves which contain an authentick account of our Religion, who were likewiſe born and bred up in this Religion, and cannot therefore be juſtified in forſaking it without any reaſon for ſo doing, nor, without their own inexcuſable fault, be ignorant of Chriſtianity itſelf, and of the grounds and reaſons on which it is eſtabliſhed; I ſay, in reſpect of perſons of this character, who wilfully reject the Goſpel, it is a righteous thing with God to reject them, and to deny them any part in that ſalvation which they obſtinately and perverſly put from them, and treat as a mere fable and deluſion.

When we hear our Lord and Maſter ſaying, [t] *he that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* Shall we think the ſentence here pronounced on theſe two ſorts of men unequal, and, as ſuch, unſuitable to the character of a divine Prophet, and the Saviour of the world? By no means; for our Lord well knew, and the thing was, in a manner, evident of itſelf, that men, at that time, loved darkneſs

[t] Mark xvi. 16.

neſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil; they believed not the truth, becauſe they had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs; they had not the love of God in them; they had not heard and learned of the Father (*i. e.* they had not made a right improvement of former diſpenſations of Religion) and were not of Chriſt's ſheep, of a meek and humble diſpoſition of mind; for want of which, they did not know his voice and follow him; their hearts were barred with pride and vain glory, which made them love the praiſe of men, more than the praiſe of God; with covetouſneſs, which made them deride a teacher who would not allow that a man might, at once, ſerve *God and Mammon*; and with malice and revenge, which gave them an averſion for the man that taught forgiveneſs of injuries, as an eſſential qualification of his diſciples; with theſe, and ſuch like ſinful prejudices, were their hearts faſt barred, or they muſt needs have opened to ſo much conviction as the truth came attended with in that age, even to the ſenſes of men.

And though indeed the caſe is not altogether the ſame now, as it was then, they ſeeing thoſe miracles with their own eyes, which we receive upon the credit of hiſtory and tradition; yet ſtill, when it is conſidered that we can have no good reaſon to call in queſtion the truth of thoſe hiſtories, and of this tradition; that the Chriſtian Doctrine hath internal marks of credibility, which muſt

beſpeak the eſteem of every ſerious and well-diſpoſed mind; that the amazing ſucceſs of the Goſpel, and the fulfilment therein of ſeveral Prophecies of our Saviour concerning this matter, and the judgments of heaven that ſhould befall the unbelieving *Jews*, are arguments that did not ſubſiſt at the firſt preaching of the Goſpel, nor for ſome time after in that ſtrength which they do now; and finally, that whereas that generation of men, who were called to believe, had the prejudices of education to overcome, which prejudices now are on the ſide of Chriſtianity: I ſay, when all theſe things are conſidered, if they do not quite ballance the advantage which they, who ſaw the wonderful works performed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, had above us in theſe later ages of the world, yet they bring the two caſes ſo near to a parallel, or equality, as to juſtify our applying thoſe words of our Saviour to the preſent caſe. [u] *If any man do his will* (the will of God) that is, be upright in heart, and of a teachable diſpoſition, *he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of myſelf*; and, conſequently, to leave thoſe without excuſe, who, in ſuch circumſtances as I now have ſuppoſed, caſt off the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and turn infidels. What do theſe men leſs than judge themſelves unworthy of eternal life? And therefore inſtead of giving any hope of the final ſalvation of ſuch unbe-

[u] John vii. 17.

unbelievers, the Gospel seems rather to take it all away. If there should prove to be any very extraordinary instances of persons sincere, yet intangled in the snares of infidelity, there is no doubt, that the righteous Judge of the world will have a proper regard to such exceptions; though one may very well fear, that this is hardly supposeable.

Let us next consider Faith as connoting, or comprehending, a life and conversation agreeable to the belief of the Gospel; and we shall find the reason to be no less evident (rather more so) why Christianity, if it be a true Religion, should make this indispensably necessary. The Gospel requires a living Faith, such a knowledge of Jesus Christ as is not unfruitful; it revives the eternal law of righteousness, inforces it with higher sanctions, and binds the duties of it on the conscience in the strongest manner imaginable. And really, if the Gospel had not done this, but had set men at liberty from all these moral ties and obligations, this very thing would have been an unanswerable objection against it.

The moral law, or law of nature, is in its very essence unrepealable. God cannot deny himself; which yet he must do, before he can cease to require of his reasonable creatures, as the invariable condition of his favour, that holiness which is the glory and perfection of his own nature. Shall the rock be removed out of its place for thee? Shall

the foundations of moral good and evil, more firm than the foundations of the earth, or the pillars of heaven, yea, as well fixed as eternity itself, arising from the same original necessity, as the moral perfections of the Deity themselves do, be destroyed, or set aside, that thou mayest follow thy pleasures, undismayed with the fear of a future reckoning, and have the greater incouragement to sin? Or, to set it in the least odious light, shall God slight and, as it were, forget his *holiness* in order to magnify his *grace*, or rather to humour a false notion which thou hast of that *grace?* Were it possible he might do this, which it is not; yet would it remain for ever impossible, in the nature of things, that an unholy creature should be a happy one. The happiness of heaven, consisting in the vision of a holy God, would be no happiness to Beings of this character.

Let the object be never so well fitted to give pleasure; it can give no pleasure but to percipient Beings, and these indowed with proper faculties, and faculties restored to their right order and perfection. Injoyment, when we speak of intelligent Beings, and of injoyment suited to such Beings, is mutual love and esteem, and agreeable converse; which can never be without a similitude or likeness of characters, much less where there is the greatest dissimilitude, as there is between God and all wicked spirits; that is, between light

and

and darkneſs, between the fountain of moral, as well as natural good; and Beings who having been created good by him, have made themſelves evil. Indeed, this is ſo plain a caſe, that they, who, by their pernicious tenets, have done moſt to undermine and deſtroy the moral law; yet cannot help confeſſing the neceſſity of holineſs by way of qualification for heaven; though they deny the neceſſity of it to juſtification, and its being a condition even of ſalvation, or heaven, itſelf.

I am glad they go ſo far as they do; though we owe them no great thanks for it; but ſurely the difference they make between juſtification and ſalvation, and between a condition and a qualification, is without all foundation. The complacential love and favour of God always goes along with juſtification; he juſtifies and pardons none in whom he does not delight. But can he delight in thoſe who are utterly deſtitute of inherent righteouſneſs? No imputed righteouſneſs whatſoever can hide the deformity and pollution of ſuch ſouls from that God who is of more piercing eyes than not to ſee iniquity, where it is, through any veil or covering, and of purer eyes than to behold it with approbation. Holineſs is not only neceſſary as a qualification on our part, for the injoyment of God, or that we may be capable of finding our happineſs in him, but as the condition of that injoyment, or

as that without which he cannot approve and delight in us. Let his Son be never ſo much the object of his paternal love and approbation, becauſe of his perfect righteouſneſs and obedience, inſtead of approving and rewarding us the more for that reaſon, if we have no righteouſneſs at all of our own, he muſt be the more diſpleaſed with us upon that account, and judge it fit to ſhew ſeverer marks of his diſpleaſure againſt thoſe who refuſe to write after ſuch a copy. Not to add, that, if holineſs was not neceſſary to final ſalvation, as a condition, but merely as a qualification for it, this qualification might be wrought in the *Elect* in the very article of death, or even after it; nor would there be any incongruity in making thoſe perfectly happy in the next life, who continued in their rebellion againſt God to the laſt moment of this; only changing their natures the inſtant he deſigned to admit them to his preſence. A thought ſo ſhocking, that I fancy there is no ſerious mind but muſt recoil at it.

11. The Goſpel is eaſily vindicated, in requiring no more than ſuch a Faith. If God ſees fit to ſhew favour to the ſinful children of men upon any condition, ſo far as to beſtow upon all that comply with this condition, the higheſt poſſible happineſs which their nature will admit of, there is no condition can be mentioned more fit and proper

than

than Faith. For Faith being nothing elſe but ſuch a belief of what God is, hath done, and revealed, as begets anſwerable affections of mind, and produces a ſuitable courſe of outward actions; the reaſonable creature does, by ſuch a Faith, 1. Honour God as much as he is capable of honouring him; and, 2. Make the beſt uſe and improvement of his own faculties that he is capable of making. And that the Creator, infinitely wiſe and good, ſhould be pleaſed with his creature thus affected and diſpoſed, and acting in ſo reaſonable a manner, does by no means contradict, but exactly fall in with our idea of ſuch a Being.

Let us conſider, a little diſtinctly, the two reaſons here mentioned of God's being well pleaſed with ſuch a Faith.

1. The reaſonable creature by ſuch a Faith, honours God as much as he is capable of honouring him. For what is it for a finite imperfect Being to honour that Being who is infinite in all perfection? For a creature to honour his Creator? For a ſubject, in the kingdom of God, to honour the ſupreme head and governor of this kingdom? For a Being, conſtantly and neceſſarily dependent upon another, and highly favoured by him, to honour the Being on whom he thus perpetually depends, and to whom he is thus unſpeakably obliged? Finally, for one, who is aſſured of the truth of a great many things by

by another, and promiſed a great many things by him, to honour the perſon who hath pawned the credit of his word for theſe things? It is plain, that to honour God in all theſe reſpects, is not to do ſomething which is of advantage to God himſelf, or that makes the leaſt alteration in him, or in any of thoſe things from which his eſſential glory and bleſſedneſs reſult; no; but only expreſſing, in our affections and actions, a due ſenſe and apprehenſion of the infinite diſtance, and of the manifold relations, between God and us. The more clearly to conceive of this, let us attend to the few particulars juſt now reckoned up.

In the firſt place—Is God a Being of *Infinite Perfection*, while we ourſelves are poor, finite, imperfect Beings; at a leſs remove from nothing, than from this firſt and fountain Being? And what then can honour God more than Faith does, under this glorious character, which denotes thoſe thoughts and ſentiments in the mind, and that habit and poſture of ſoul, which moſt exactly anſwer and correſpond to the idea of an allperfect Being? A fixed perſuaſion of the reality of ſuch a Being; an awful contemplation of him; the profoundeſt veneration of his incomprehenſible greatneſs and majeſty; the higheſt admiration and eſteem of all his moral attributes; a moſt affectionate adherence of the ſoul to him; a repoſeful acqui-

eſſence

eſſence in him; fervent and inceſſant deſires of a greater likeneſs to him; and a freer intercourſe and communication with him? All theſe acts and affections of the ſoul meet in a living Faith. And can any two things match and harmonize more than ſuch an excellence of nature in the Deity, and ſuch a temper of mind in the reaſonable creature? The only way of honouring God is to know and confeſs him what he is; it being impoſſible that we ſhould aſcribe to him any perfection, or excellence, that he really hath not; which is a thing that frequently happens in the marks and expreſſions of honour and reſpect that paſs between men and men; which, for want of a foundation in truth, diſcover not the worth, but the vanity or defects of the perſon honoured; nor the judgment and ſincerity, but blind ignorance, or baſer flattery, of thoſe that make a ſhew of honouring them.

Faith having framed a true, though faint, idea of the perfections of the Deity, as they appear and ſhine forth in his works, and in his word, places this idea or conception in the view of the mind, and ſo fixes its attention upon it, that, being intirely poſſeſſed and ſwallowed up by it, the mind does, after a ſort, and for a time, forget itſelf, and all other things, which in the preſence of this infinite Being are as nothing. The ſtructure of our bodies, the faculties of our ſouls, and all the

the wonders of the viſible creation, having firſt led up our thoughts to God, do then, as it were, vaniſh and diſappear, that the ſoul, in holy quietude and ſilence, may meditate on the moſt excellent of all objects, the parent of all Being, and fountain of all perfection.

It may not be improper to take a more particular view of ſome of theſe perfections. Is the Deity *Immenſe*, or every where preſent? And is his *Knowledge* as boundleſs as his *Preſence?* So Faith apprehends him, and ſets him continually before us, as filling heaven and earth, as within us, above us, and all around us; acquainted with all our ways, and underſtanding even our thoughts afar off: the ſerious conſideration of which makes us careful always to behave as in the preſence of that God, who, though but a ſingle witneſs, is more than the whole world of obſervers beſides; as it likewiſe inſpires the upright ſoul with a humble aſſurance in well-doing, and even in all its attempts to do well, and to be ſtill going on to perfection; its moſt ſecret deſires and diſpoſitions, towards that which is good, not being hidden from him who is greater than the heart, and knoweth all things.

Is he ſtyled *the only wiſe God?* Hath he eſtabliſhed the world by his wiſdom, and ſtretched out the heavens by his underſtanding? Is he wonderful in council, and excellent in working? Faith does homage to this ſovereign wiſdom, by ſubmitting to it all our pri-

private and partial views of things; so that, instead of glorying in our wisdom, we glory in this, that we know the Lord, and own the foolishness of God (too often so accounted by poor short-sighted, prejudiced mortals) to be wiser than men. We see this wisdom in all the works, and ways, and laws of God; and where we are not able to follow its hidden reasons and operations, we cry out, with humble adoration, *O the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* The wisdom of God, in the frame of the world, in the dispensations of Providence, in the various Revelations of himself to mankind, more especially the Gospel, and that glorious design of man's redemption of which that gives an account, is not over-looked, or slightly regarded by them that believe; who, being made the children of wisdom by Faith, devoutly study it, and, to the best of their power, strenuously justify and defend it.

Does *all Power* belong unto God? Faith readily confesses it; never pretends to limit that power which is, in itself, unlimited; thinks nothing impossible for it to effect, that is not impossible and contradictory in its own nature; desires nothing so much as the friendship of this all powerful Being; dreads nothing so much as having him for an enemy. The awe of the Almighty,

mighty, inſpired by Faith, hold us back from ſining againſt him; and, becauſe he is the Almighty, or All-Sufficient God, we eſteem it the moſt neceſſary part, and the ſupreme point, of wiſdom, to walk before him, and be perfect.

Is *Holineſs* the glory of the divine nature? Faith teaches us ſo to account it; to look upon the idea of God, as exceeding maimed and imperfect without it; and therefore not to leave out this attribute in all our conceptions of this moſt adorable Being; in a word, to ſhew the value we put upon this perfection, by our earneſt deſires and indeavours to be cloathed with ſome rays of it. Faith traces the holineſs of God, in the methods he hath taken to promote holineſs and righteouſneſs among men, all which evidently declare the neceſſity of it; as, particularly, by his holy precepts, by the example of his own Son incarnate, and by the expiation of ſin by his death.

Is *Goodneſs* an eſſential attribute of God, and *Mercy his delight?* And is it one principal deſign of the Goſpel to give us the moſt exalted apprehenſions of the kindneſs and love of God towards man? Faith readily ſubſcribes to all the great things that are ſpoken of the Grace of God in the inſpired Volume, and confeſſes that after all that has or can be ſaid, the riches of the divine goodneſs and mercy will not fully be diſcovered, nor the praiſes of angels and ſaints triumphant ever equal it. This makes the ſoul chearful in the

the ſervice of God, and the thoughts and meditations of God ſweet and precious to the ſoul. The heart grows warm, and the tongue eloquent upon this theme.

Finally.—Among the titles and attributes of God, are we to reckon his being *a God of Truth*; and *without the leaſt variableneſs or ſhadow of turning?* Faith diſpoſes the ſoul to honour theſe attributes, by repoſing an abſolute truſt and confidence in the ſincerity and faithfulneſs of this unchangeable Being. What he hath been in ages paſt, becauſe he changeth not, he will always be, to them that fear him and keep his covenant; towards whom his mercy ſhall indure for ever.—Theſe few hints may help to ſhew how Faith honours God, as a Being of infinite perfection.

In the ſecond place—What is it for a creature to honour his Creator? But to own that he is the work of his hands, and to praiſe and magnify that free and powerful goodneſs by which he is ſo fearfully and wonderfully made; to take notice of the diſtinguiſhing favour of God, in placing him in ſo high a rank of beings; of that image of his own ſpirituality and immortality, which he hath imprinted on one part of the human nature; and of the end and deſign of his creation, that he ſhould ſerve and glorify his Creator, in order to injoy him; together with the great reaſonableneſs of complying with this deſign. It is by Faith that the intelligent creature honours

nours God in all theſe ways. He acknowledges himſelf to be the creature of God, and is mindful to behave as ſuch, that in all things God may be glorified.

Again—What is it for a ſubject in the kingdom of God, to honour the ſupreme head and governor of this kingdom? But to acknowledge that he directs and governs all the affairs of his kingdom in the very beſt manner, by the moſt excellent laws and conſtitutions, and by the wiſeſt and moſt ſteady counſels; never giving his ſubjects the leaſt juſt reaſon of complaint againſt him; but on the contrary, ever purſuing thoſe meaſures which have the greateſt tendency to preſerve them in a happy and flouriſhing ſtate, to ſtrike terror into evil doers, and to incourage them that do well; to acknowledge this not in words only, but in a ſignificant behaviour. If this be honouring God, as the moſt high poſſeſſor of heaven and earth, and abſolute ruler in both, it is certain he cannot be honoured more than he is by the Faith before deſcribed. The believer manifeſts what notion he hath of the divine government by his unreſerved and chearful ſubmiſſion to it, in every thing conforming himſelf to the will of God, whether it be to do, or to ſuffer, and unaffectedly zealous for the honour of his Sovereign, and all his adminiſtrations.

Again,

Again—What is it for a Being, conſtantly and neceſſarily dependent upon another, and highly favoured by him, to honour the Being on whom he thus perpetually depends, and to whom he is thus unſpeakably obliged? But humbly to confeſs his dependance and obligations, to live ever mindful of them, to forbear doing do thoſe things which would contradict this confeſſion, and to practiſe all thoſe that are neceſſary to demonſtrate the ſincerity of it. In this manner it is that Faith prompts men to act towards God, their Almighty Friend and Benefactor. It makes them continue inſtant in prayer, and abound therein with thankſgiving; obſerve the methods of divine Grace, celebrate its unſearchable riches, own the leaſt mercies to be undeſerved, yet value thoſe moſt which are moſt valuable, and diligent to imploy all according to the directions of that God from whom they have received all.

Once more—What is it for one who is aſſured of the truth of ſeveral things by another, by whom alſo he hath a great many things promiſed him, to honour the perſon who hath given him the ſecurity of his word for all theſe things? But to place the moſt intire confidence in what he ſays. The more intirely he confides in him, does he not honour him the more? Thus does Faith honour God in all his Revelations of himſelf to mankind, and in all the Promiſes which he hath

graciouſly condeſcended to make them. Such a thing is certainly ſo, for God hath ſaid it. Such a thing will certainly be, for God hath promiſed it. And becauſe I believe that things are and will be exactly as the word of God repreſents them, I therefore, venture my all upon it; or rather I judge it no venture, being well perſuaded that I run no manner of hazard by it, though I part with preſent and ſenſible things to ſecure thoſe that are inviſible and future. Is the prudence of the Merchant to be juſtified, who trafficks to diſtant lands which he never ſaw? Or of the Huſbandman, who plants and manures a vineyard, or plows the earth, and buries his ſeed in it, when he is not ſure that he ſhall ever ſee the fruit of his labour? And the ſame may be ſaid of the other trades and profeſſions of life, which have no more than a probability, greater or leſs, of ſucceſs; much more then are they to be juſtified who live by Faith. The foundation theſe go upon is no leſs than the power and truth, and immutable faithfulneſs, of the eternal God. Hence was *Abraham*'s Faith, who againſt hope believed in hope; who not being weak in Faith, ſtaggered not at the Promiſe through unbelief, but was ſtrong in Faith, giving glory unto God; being fully perſuaded, that what he had promiſed he was able alſo to perform; for which reaſon, it was imputed to him for righ-

righteouſneſs. Obſerve the expreſſion of *Abraham*'s giving glory to God by the *ſtrength* of his Faith. Since God is pleaſed in great condeſcention to eſteem himſelf glorified by the Faith of his ſervants; the ſtronger that Faith the more glory doth he receive from them. Hence likewiſe was the Faith of all thoſe worthies, whoſe names are celebrated by the Writer to the *Hebrews*; that Faith, *which was the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen*, by which they condemned the world, and became heirs of the righteouſneſs which is by Faith; looking for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God; indured as ſeeing him that is inviſible, ſubdued kingdoms, wrought righteouſneſs, out of weakneſs were made ſtrong, were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better reſurrection; had trial of cruel mockings and ſcourgings, of bonds and impriſonment; yet, under all, had reſpect to the recompence of reward; and, though they had not received the Promiſes, but only ſeen them afar off, were perſuaded of them, and imbraced them, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth.

This is the *firſt* thing that vindicates the Goſpel in requiring no more than ſuch a Faith, *viz.* that the reaſonable creature does, by ſuch a Faith, honour God as much as he is capable of honouring him.

2. By the ſame Faith the reaſonable creature makes the beſt uſe and improvement of his own faculties that he is capable of making. No faculty is beſtowed upon him in vain, or ſuffered to lie unimployed; or imployed otherwiſe than the Creator intended.

Is the ſoul, man's nobler part, preferable to the body by many degrees? Do Reaſon and order require that the former of theſe ſhould lead and govern, the latter follow and obey? Faith obſerves this order; exalts the ſpiritual part, and depreſſes the bodily; is more concerned for the intereſt and proſperity of the immortal mind, than of the dying fleſh; and permits not paſſion and appetite to over-rule the inward ſenſe and conviction of what is beſt, and moſt becoming a man to do.

Does the underſtanding of man ſet him above the beaſts of the field? And was his underſtanding given him that he might know God? This is the very uſe to which Faith applies it; turning the eye of the mind towards things heavenly and divine, and purifying and inlightening it, that it may be fitted to contemplate them. Ignorance extinguiſhes or ſmothers the light of the mind; voluntary and criminal errors place things in a falſe deceitful light, which, in ſome caſes, is worſe than none at all. While Faith, being ever con-

conjoined with the love of knowledge and truth, is the ſureſt means of arriving at both.

Is it an eſſential part of the character of man as a moral agent, and a very great honour and privilege, that he hath freedom of choice, a power to act, or to forbear acting, as he judges to be beſt? Faith directs and inclines a man to chuſe and act right; takes off every corrupt biaſs from the will, or ſtrenthens the faculty ſo as to prevent its being carried away by it. Conſcience commands me one way, the world and the fleſh ſollicit me another. And nothing more certain than that I am under no neceſſity of following theſe blind guides, how ſtrongly ſoever they ſollicit me. They may ſollicit and perſuade, but cannot conſtrain. And yet, on the other hand, it is manifeſt that, if it was not for the aſſiſtance of Faith, I ſhould not be able to keep my ground. And how is it that Faith counteracts theſe powerful temptations, but by placing the objects of eternity before us, and making them appear real? By which means, other things loſe their power to allure or terrify, and the ſoul is at liberty to follow, uncontrolled, the dictates of inlightened Reaſon.

What is the uſe and deſign of the affections, but that we ſhtould purſue with the greater vigour thoſe hings which the underſtanding approves, and the will chuſes? And then do the affections anſwer this de-

sign, when Faith hath the management and disposal of them; and the more intire the possession that Faith hath of the mind, with the more undivided motion do the affections tend towards the best objects. The force of the soul is more collected, and, as it were, centers all in one point.

Is man indowed with executive powers, able to do something for God, for his fellow-creatures, and for himself; to contribute to his own happiness and salvation, and, in many ways, to be useful to the world about him? Faith gives a right direction to his activity, makes him wise to do good, and pleased and industrious in doing it; and imploys all the members of his body, as well as faculties of his mind, as instruments of righteousness unto God.

And while Faith thus exerts its influence and operation, every virtue is introduced into the soul, takes deeper root, cherished by its warm beams, and hath full scope and room to shew itself; humility, fortitude, prudence, meekness, charity, moderation. Our very beings are bettered and improved; we inlarge the stock we set up with, and (with all submission and thankfulness be it spoken) return God his own with usury.

And since this is so, that a man by Faith thus honours God, and makes the best use and improvement of his own faculties, is it any disparagement to the Gospel, as a divine Revelation, that it makes nothing necessary,

ceſſary, to our obtaining the favour of God and everlaſting ſalvation, more than Faith? What can we imagine fit and proper for it to require more?

Would the Goſpel appear to be a Religion more worthy of God, if it commanded a great number of things in their own nature indifferent, thereby to try our obedience? Had God been pleaſed to injoin ſuch things, we might have been ſure that he did it not without good reaſon; and, as it is probable, we ſhould have been able to judge of the reaſons of the divine commands, in many inſtances, as the ancient *Jews* could do in reſpect of their cuſtoms. And, which is more, the man that hath true Faith, is in that very temper of mind which would have taught him ſubmiſſion to the will of God (the previous queſtion being firſt ſufficiently cleared, as to its being his will) in whatever way he had ſeen fit to make trial of his abſolute reſignation to him. Whoever is obedient to the Goſpel, the ſame good diſpoſition of ſoul being ſuppoſed, would have yielded obedience to the Law, had he lived under it; or to the Goſpel, if there had been any room for adopting the ceremonies of the Law, or inſtituting others in exchange for thoſe which it aboliſhed. But as the Goſpel hath not done this, but confined itſelf to neceſſary things; ſo there is not the leaſt ground to queſtion the truth of

it, or its being from God, on this account; but rather (following the natural notions of our minds, and the preſent appearances of things) the direct contrary. The Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, like that of nature, was intended for univerſal practice and obſervation; and, for that reaſon, adds little to natural Religion (the duties of which are morally, and therefore unchangeably good) excepting ſuch things as the fall of man, and the corruption of the world, quite ſunk into vice, had rendered neceſſary. A pure and ſpiritual inſtitution is more apparently ſuited, not only to the nature of God, but of that divine and heavenly felicity for which it is deſigned to train us up. And whereas a ceremonious and burthenſome Religion might be thought better fitted to teach us an implicit ſubjection and reſignation to the ſupreme will, and to keep us in perpetual action and exerciſe; theſe advantages are more than ballanced by the inconveniences that would naturally follow: as for inſtance, mens reſting in the ritual and poſitive performances of Religion, and fancying that, by their diligence and exactneſs in theſe, they ſhould make amends for their defects in the duties and virtues of everlaſting righteouſneſs; a miſtake ſo exceeding pernicious to the ſouls of men, that it became the wiſdom and goodneſs of God to prevent it, by admitting only a few Poſitive Inſtitutions; and theſe manifeſtly adapted to pro-

promote a ſpirit of true piety and devotion, and of univerſal, undiſſembled goodneſs. There is reaſon to think that nothing, but the neceſſity of the caſe, could have induced the wiſe and holy Governor of the world, to give any part of it ſuch a Law as he did to the *Jews*; and therefore, when there was no longer any ſuch neceſſity, he immediately laid aſide that Law, that he might govern men by one more directly expreſſive of his love of real holineſs and goodneſs, and better fitted to beget the love of theſe things in his moral ſubjects.

But ſhould not the Goſpel have required perfection in order to declare the infinite purity and perfection of the divine nature? Is it fit there ſhould be an intire reconciliation between a holy God and his ſinful creatures, whoſe tranſgreſſions are ſo many, and their virtues at beſt ſo very imperfect? The anſwer is obvious, that, if God would be favourable at all to his offending creatures, it muſt be on the foot of ſincerity; ſinleſs perfection being become morally impoſſible. And what more ſuitable to the over flowing goodneſs of God, the univerſal Parent of mankind, than to ſhew mercy to his frail offspring? The goodneſs of God could not appear to ſuch advantage in any other way, if at all; nor is it any impeachment to his holineſs, ſince he does not allow of the leaſt ſin, by declaring the greateſt to be pardonable to all that truly

truly repent: there is no action or word, or thought, in any degree faulty, which he approves; though for every ſuch fault, which hath the plea of human infirmity, he does not immediately caſt us out of his favour. The preſent being a ſinful ſtate, is a ſtate of humiliation, ſorrow and ſuffering.

If it be ſaid, that there is a great deal of difference between ſhewing mercy to penitent ſinners, and beſtowing upon them the greateſt poſſible reward; that the reward promiſed by the Goſpel is perfect and everlaſting, while the obedience of Faith is ſhort and defective; which ſome may think to be hardly reconcileable with the governing wiſdom and juſtice of the moſt high God; I might anſwer, that [w] *God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways; but as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are his ways* (for mercy) *higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.* But waving this, I only aſk, does not the Chriſtian Revelation, at the ſame time that it holds forth ſo great a recompence of reward, declare or make known the method in which it was procured, even by the ſufferings, and obedience unto death, of the Son of God; and is diſpenſed even by his hands, as our worthy Mediator and Advocate? Hereby ſignifying to us the great evil of ſin which required ſo expenſive an atonement, and the peculiar acceptance

[w] Iſai. lv. 8, & 9 compared with ver. 7.

ceptableneſs of the perfect righteouſneſs and obedience of his Son; for the ſake of which, he rewards our imperfect obedience with eternal life and happineſs, which he would not have done, had we been properly capable of that which is perfect.

The end of Chriſt's Mediation was not that creatures who, with very little care, might preſerve themſelves in a ſtate of perfect innocence, might have the hope of compleat and eternal happineſs, though in many things they offended (which would look too much like an incouragement to ſin) but that creatures infeebled in all their powers, and ſubject to innumerable errors and temptations, might be incited to do their beſt; by the conſideration that the little they do, proceeding from an affectionate zeal for that which is good, ſhall be ſo far from loſing its reward, as to be infinitely over-paid for. All which being conſidered, we are under the ſtrongeſt obligations to do good, and have no incouragement at all to do evil; foraſmuch as after ſuch a declaration both of the mercy and the holineſs of God, we cannot doubt of his readineſs to accept the truly penitent and faithful, or of his unalterable purpoſe to puniſh all preſumptuous and incorrigible offenders. Thus the glory of every attribute is conſulted, the divine law is guarded againſt contempt, and the original deſign of God in the creation of man, *viz.* the happineſs of his reaſonable creature,

creature, moſt effectually anſwered. And what other ſcheme of things there could have been, more worthy of God for its Author, than the Goſpel appears to be in this view of it, I am bold to ſay, it will be for ever impoſſible for the wiſdom of man to ſhew.

This I think ſufficiently vindicates the honour of the Goſpel in requiring no more than Faith.

III. The Goſpel may be as eaſily vindicated in making no diſtinction between one part of mankind and another, but laying open the favour of God, and the bleſſedneſs of the next life, to all alike, upon this condition.

It is true, the *Jews* had ſo far the preference, as to be the firſt-fruits of the new creation, or to have an opportunity of being ſo. Our Lord himſelf was not ſent but to the *loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.* He went about all their cities and villages, teaching in their ſynagogues, and preaching the Goſpel of the kingdom. He choſe his Apoſtles, and other diſciples, out of that people; by whom the Goſpel was communicated to thoſe of their own nation, before they publiſhed it to the reſt of the world. This is taken notice of in the verſe of which the text is a part. The Goſpel was *the power of God unto ſalvation, to the* Jew *firſt.* And according to our Apoſtle's own confeſſion, [x] *it was neceſſary that the word ſhould be firſt ſpoken unto them.* Not as

[x] Acts xiii. 46.

as if there was any antecedent neceſſity of this, as an act of juſtice and equity which God owed them, but as an act of favour which he had always purpoſed to ſhew them, as a part of his original deſign, that [y] *repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in the Name of Chriſt, among all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem, and then paſſing on to the other cities of* Iſrael. Out of regard to the friendſhip that was between him, and the father of the faithful, and the covenant of *peculiarity* that he had entered into, *to be a God to him, and to his ſeed after him*, and which had ſubſiſted for ſo many ages, God was willing to put ſome marks of honour and reſpect upon them when that covenant was about to vaniſh away; particularly, by opening the kingdom of the Meſſiah among them, by perſons of their own nation: for though the promiſe was to *Abraham*, that [z] *in his ſeed all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed*; yet this was not to be 'till, [a] *having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, God had ſent him to bleſs that ſeed firſt* (in whom the other families of the earth were to be bleſſed) *by turning them away every one from his iniquities.*

And beſides this, the *Jews* were the only nation who were worſhippers of the true God; and in that reſpect, the fitteſt to have the

[y] Luke xxiv. 47. Matt. x. 23. [z] Gen. xii. 3.
[a] Acts iii. 25, 26.

the Goſpel firſt imparted to them, in order to their being imployed afterwards to bring others to the acknowledgement of this one God, as well as of the one Mediator between God and man. For theſe, and other reaſons, it pleaſed God the invitation ſhould be firſt made to the *Jews*; but, in its being ſaid, it was to be firſt made to them, it is plainly implied, that they were not the only perſons to be invited. It is therefore added, *and alſo to the Greek* or *Gentile*. Theſe glad tidings quickly ſpread, and became univerſal. And for this, there was very good reaſon; ſince, as the *Jews* needed an extraordinary act of *Grace* in the ſame manner as the *Gentiles* did, being, on many accounts, no better than they, and concluded alike under ſin; ſo the *Gentiles* had an equal pretenſion, in the reaſon of the thing, to the mercy and compaſſion of God as the *Jews*. [b] *Is he the God of the* Jews *only? And not alſo of the* Gentiles? *Yes, of the* Gentiles *alſo*; *ſeeing it is one God* (the Maker of the univerſe, and common Father of mankind) *who juſtifies the believing* Jew *and* Gentile; [c] *for there is no reſpect of perſons with God.*

The everlaſting ſtates of mankind, are not to depend on their being of this, or that nation, or on any other meerly external difference; ſince he hath made of *one blood all nations, to dwell upon the face of the earth.* They

[b] Rom. iii. 29, 30. [c] ii. 11.

They have all the same first parents as the *Jews* had, though their intermediate parents are not the same; *by one man sin came into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all:* and therefore, *as by one man's disobedience many* (οι πολλοι, *the many*, i.e. the whole body of mankind, and not the *Jews* only, who were but a small handful of people, in comparison) *were made sinners*, treated as such, it was the good pleasure of God, that, *by the obedience of one, the same many should be made righteous*, i.e. restored to a capacity of life and immortality, as if they were perfectly righteous, *Rom.* v. 12 and 19.

And it deserves to be carefully noted, that this reason for laying open the favour of God *to all that believe*, without puting any difference between *one nation and the rest of the world*, holds equally for making the Gospel salvation common in another respect; I mean so, as that there should be no difference between *one person and another*, but all that hear the sound of the Gospel should be in a capacity of obtaining salvation by Jesus Christ. If it be replied, and so they are, if they *believe*; I would take the liberty to ask, whether all are capable of *believing* and *obeying* the Gospel? For unless they are, they are not capable of being saved. Is it really so, as it hath been represented by some, that the greatest part of those, that have the Gospel preached to them, cannot attain to *Saving Faith*;

Faith; while a few, who are abſolutely ordained to eternal life, cannot but *believe?* It will then follow, that God beſtows everlaſting happineſs and ſalvation upon ſome without any condition, (it not being proper to call that a condition required of them, which God works in them in purſuance of an abſolute decree, and by an irreſiſtible act of his *Grace*) while to others he offers it indeed, but upon a condition that is impoſſible, which is worſe than not offering it at all. In effect, according to this ſcheme, all but a few are not, and cannot be, under a covenant of *Grace*, but under a covenant of *Perfection*. If they perfectly keep the commandments of God, they may enter into life, otherwiſe not.

It is to no purpoſe to object that Faith will ſave them; for if this Faith be impoſſible, as impoſſible as perfection itſelf, where is the odds, as to all ſuch perſons, betwixt the law of perfection, or innocence, and the law of Faith? Adding this latter to the former, is ſo far from bettering their condition, that it makes it abundantly worſe; ſince, beſides their being puniſhed for every ſin againſt the moral law of God, after the ſame manner as if it had been in their power to live without ſin, they are likewiſe expoſed to ſtill ſorer puniſhment upon the account of their having injoy'd the Goſpel, and not believed and obey'd it; though it was what they were not able

able to do. And the abſurdity, of ſuppoſing the *reprobate* perſon to be puniſhed the more ſeverely becauſe he hath not *Saving Faith*, increaſes to a more monſtrous ſize, if *Saving Faith* be the ſame with aſſurance of a man's perſonal election to ſalvation; for then he is not only condemned for not doing impoſſibilities, but for not believing a falſehood, or that God deſigned that for him which he never did.

It muſt be remembered, I am only ſtating the natural and unavoidable conſequences of ſome mens notions in this matter. We may aſk here, with a ſmall variation in the words, as before—Is God the God of a few only, or of all? Doubtleſs, of all that are ſincerely willing to avouch him for their God. Are all ſufferers alike by the firſt *Adam?* And, notwithſtanding this, have all but a few no benefit, but are rather put into worſe circumſtances, by the ſecond? Is there any room to charge the Judge of the whole world with being a reſpecter of perſons? Certainly there is not; and yet I do not ſee how the charge could be evaded, if, when he came to paſs judgment upon the world, he did not conſider what men had done to qualify themſelves for his favour, or to deſerve his diſpleaſure; how they had improved, or miſimproved their ſeveral abilities; but proceeded wholly according to a diſtinction he himſelf had arbitrarily made between them before they

were born. The *Jew* made his [d] *boast of God*, to the exclusion of the poor *Gentile*, who was to have no share but in the common bounties of Providence, unless he submitted to the yoke of the *Mosaic* Law. In the third Chapter of the same Epistle, the Writer, after having observed, ver. 26. that *God is the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus* (without insisting upon any other qualification) immediately asks this question, ver. 27. *Where is boasting then?* (this boasting in God, as our God only, and as confining his favours to us) *It is excluded*, saith he: *By what Law? Of Works? Nay, but by the Law of Faith.* That is, whereas the Law might seem to give the *Jews* some occasion or handle for such boasting, by inclosing them like a garden in the midst of a wild and barren wilderness, the Gospel, which puts all who submit to Christ as their Lord and Saviour on an equal foot, takes away all ground for any such boasting or glorying as this.

May not a like argument be made use of to prove that all, who injoy the Gospel, are originally upon the same terms, as to the capacity of salvation, one as another; so that what makes the wide difference of final happiness and misery, is not an *unconditional Decree* of God that such a particular number shall be saved, and all the rest perish without remedy; but the different use and improvement

[d] Rom. ii. 17.

ment of the means and opportunities afforded them? Otherwiſe, as the *Jews* boaſted over the *Gentiles*, as having no part with them in the favour of God, the *Elect* might, with greater reaſon, boaſt over the *Non-elect*, or *Reprobates* (underſtanding theſe terms in the abſolute ſenſe) what portion have you in God, ye *Reprobates*; or what inheritance in the Son of God? What have ye to do with Jeſus any more than fallen Angels, whoſe happineſs he came to purchaſe as much as yours? And ſo, boaſting would be as little excluded by the Law of Faith, as by the Law of Works. In a word, it became him who is *infinite in goodneſs and mercy, having ſent his Son into the world, that the world through him might have life*, to exclude none from mercy, who do not exclude themſelves. As further, it is becoming him, who *will the judge the world in righteouſneſs*, not to condemn any for being without that Faith which, all things conſidered, it was utterly impoſſible they ſhould have; for the ſame reaſon that they, who never heard of Chriſt, ſhall not have this laid to their charge in the day, *that they did not believe in him:* they that have heard of him, and believe him to be the Son of God, but have not that Faith which is ſaving, would not deſerve to be more ſeverely dealt with for their want of this Faith, if *Saving Faith* were as impoſſible to them as *Hiſtorical Faith*, or the bare

knowledge of the Goſpel, and belief of it to be true, is to the other.

The ſum of the argument is this; God makes a promiſe of ſalvation to every one that believes; he would have this underſtood as an inſtance of his great kindneſs and mercy to every one; and will therefore do all that is neceſſary, on his part, in order to their believing; and, in this reſpect, makes no diſtinction between one part of mankind and another. All which is perfectly agreeable to the goodneſs of his own nature, to the common relations he ſtands in to the children of men, the common invitations he makes them, and the equal neceſſity and pityableneſs of their condition. Be therefore this *Univerſal Grace* of God ackowledged, and praiſed by all, and received in vain by none.

The Application of this Subject remains, which I ſhall give you in the following Reflections.

REFLECTIONS.

1. From what hath been ſaid, it is obvious to infer, that we have no juſt cauſe to be aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt, for making Faith the condition of everlaſting ſalvation; but, on the contrary, the greateſt reaſon to glory in it upon this account. I confeſs, was the Faith ſo frequently commanded,

ed, and ſo much extolled in Scripture, mere enthuſiaſm and credulity, or intended to undermine and ſubvert the foundations of moral virtue, and the unchangeable laws of righteouſneſs and goodneſs, we ſhould have too much reaſon to be aſhamed, both of our own Faith, and of that Religion which is the object of it. But none, except thoſe who do not underſtand Chriſtianity, or whoſe hatred to it diſqualifies them for equal judges of it, will pretend to lay any ſuch thing to its charge. For,

1. It is certain that Faith is a wiſe and rational act, in oppoſition to a wild enthuſiaſm, or a blind and fooliſh credulity. It is not in our power to believe againſt evidence, when it appears to the mind; nor is it our duty, in any caſe whatſoever, particularly not in this before us, to ſhut our eyes againſt evidence, that we may be able to believe what elſe we ſhould not. The Chriſtian Religion deſires no more than a fair examination. It invites men *to ſearch the Scriptures, to prove all things, to try the ſpirits.* It challenges a univerſal reception; but not upon a bare confident affirmation of its own truth. The Author of this Religion, Jeſus Chriſt, frankly owns, [e] *If I bear witneſs of myſelf, my witneſs is not true*; that is, you would have no reaſon to credit what I ſay, had you only my

[e] John v. 31.

bare word for it, without any other proof; no Court of Juſtice admitting a man's ſingle unſupported teſtimony concerning himſelf. Upon this very account he blames the *Jews*, that, provided a man's character and errand pleaſed them, they were ready to follow the greateſt impoſter, without ſtaying to examine his credentials, ver. 43. of the ſame Chapter; *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not. If another ſhall come in his own name, him ye will receive*; q. d. "I cannot "find entertainment among you, becauſe ye "do not reliſh my doctrine; it is too pure, "and ſelf-denying, and heavenly for you; "and yet, theſe are the very things that "prove it not unworthy of the true God, "in whoſe *name* I come, and by whoſe "*power* I am inabled to do ſuch mighty "works. Let another ſet out upon his own "ambitious and worldly views, and ſhew "himſelf able and ready to ſerve yours, tak-"ing care to ſay, and do nothing that may "offend your corrupt affections, and you "will preſently hearken to his pretenſions, "though he can produce no one ſign or evi-"dence, that God is with him." And, at another time, he tells them, [f] *if I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.*

Chriſtianity lays before men ſuch motives of *belief* as it knows ought to prevail, and will do ſo with all diligent and impartial inquirers

[f] John x. 37.

quirers after truth; who love the truth, not only when it favours their inclinations, but when it bears hardeſt upon them. And it is for this reaſon, it makes ſo little uſe of the common arts of perſuaſion, and does not beg, but command our aſſent. I deny not that ſome Chriſtians, out of a real concern for their Religion, may decline the trial of Reaſon, as if it threatened no leſs than deſtruction to it. But then I take leave to ſay, that ſuch perſons, in confeſſing Reaſon and Revelation to be inconſiſtent things, ſhew their zeal more than their knowledge or prudence. That which makes them ſo fearful and ſuſpicious, is either weakneſs or prejudice, or both; their not being able to defend their Religion againſt the fallacious reaſonings of its adverſaries, and then concluding that no one elſe can do it; or their having mixed ſuch doctrines with it, as they are conſcious cannot be reconciled with the firſt and moſt univerſal principles of Reaſon. Whereupon, inſtead of ſuſpecting the truth of their notions, which they ought to do, they fall out with Reaſon; and ſuppoſe a contrariety where there is, and can be, none at all, between Reaſon and Revelation. Let but the enemies of the Goſpel ſincerely indeavour to have a true notion of it before they oppoſe it; and the profeſſors of the Goſpel, who fancy that it muſt loſe ground, if Reaſon be allowed to inquire into its title, only take care to ſepa-

rate the *doctrines* of Chriſt from the *opinions* of men; and they will, each of them, be quickly convinced of their miſtake, and ſee that Faith in Chriſt is founded in the beſt and plaineſt Reaſon.

And what is the uſe we ſhould make of this conſideration, but to have the greater eſteem for our excellent Religion, and leſs regard to any Church or Party of Chriſtians who demand an implicit Faith in all their decrees; not vouchſafing ſo much as to prove that authority to which they would oblige us to ſubmit, or not allowing us freely to examine the proofs they bring for it, and, if we judge them not ſufficient, to withdraw our neck from the yoke? We muſt believe as the Church believes, and not preſume to aſk, why. Our bleſſed Lord, and his Apoſtles, treated mankind after another manner; with the *Jews*, they argued from the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, the authority of which was acknowledged by them; and both with *Jews* and *Gentiles*, from the miraculous Gifts and Operations of the Spirit of God, a ſort of demonſtration level to the apprehenſions of all men; and proved their infallibility before they went about to prove the truth of their doctrine by it. Our Saviour indeed ſaith unto *Thomas*, who would not believe unleſs he had the evidence of ſenſe, [g] *Thomas, becauſe thou haſt ſeen, thou haſt believed; bleſſed*

[g] John xx. 29.

bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed. By which he did not mean that they, who had not ſeen, had no reaſon to believe, and were therefore bleſſed for believing without reaſon; but they were bleſſed becauſe, being of an ingenuous and teachable diſpoſition, they did not require more evidence than was ſufficient, and than God was pleaſed to afford them; ſuch as the holy life of Jeſus, the nature and tendency of his doctrine, and the teſtimony of credible witneſſes, who had ſeen thoſe things which others never did.

2. The Faith which intitles to ſalvation, is a ſober and virtuous act of the mind, in oppoſition to all thoſe corrupt principles which tend to ſubvert the foundations of moral virtue, and the unchangeable law of truth and righteouſneſs. The Apoſtle *Paul* therefore, after he had eſtabliſhed the doctrine of Juſtification by Faith, puts this queſtion, [h] *Do we then make void the Law by Faith?* To which he returns this anſwer, *God forbid; yea, we eſtabliſh the Law.* Some may be ready to think, when I talk of a ſinner's being juſtified by *Faith in Chriſt*, that I plead for an exemption from all law, or obligation to a holy life (the word in the Original being νομος, without the article, or *Law* in general; not τε νομε, *the Law*, *i. e.* the *Law* of *Moſes* in particular) but this would be a very unjuſt accuſation, ariſing from a wrong notion of juſtifying Faith, which is ſuch a belief of the Goſpel,

[h] Rom. iii. 31.

Goſpel, as ingages a man to live in all things conformable to it. This is the Faith that juſtifies; and there cannot be a better fence or ſecurity to the Law of God than the aſſurance which the Goſpel gives us, that we may be juſtified and ſaved by ſuch a Faith, and that we can be juſtified and ſaved by no other. To know that our ſincere obedience, notwithſtanding all the imperfections of it, ſhall be accepted through the merits of our worthy Mediator and Advocate Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life, is the moſt powerful motive in the world to obey, from the heart, the holy Commandment that hath been delivered to us. Nor can we juſtly hope to reap any thing from a Faith that is barren of good works but ſhame and confuſion of face; ſince the Goſpel which we profeſs to believe, obliges us to be holy in all manner of converſation*.

Although

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* *Here I would beg leave humbly to propoſe the following* Query; *which, perhaps, if it had been timely thought on, would have fallen in more properly under ſome other part of my Subject.*

The *Query* is this—Whether it would not be much better, if ſome Chriſtian Divines in their Sermons, and other Diſcourſes, would a little alter their language, not uſing the word *Believer* as equivalent with a *real Chriſtian*, or truly good man; nor talking, as if *Faith* was the only qualification for acceptance with God?

The

Although no part of the Law of *Moſes*, not even the Moral Law, as given by him, is of any force; yet we are not therefore without Law to God, but, under the Law to Chriſt, ſubject to that perfect Law of Liberty, by which the ſubjects of the Redeemer's kingdom are governed; comprizing in it every thing intrinſically good and lovely, in all the former Laws of God to mankind. The Goſpel is therefore ſtiled *Sound Doctrine*—*A Doctrine according to godlineſs*—and *our moſt holy Faith*—all which titles are manifeſtly due to it; for as much as it preſcribes the beſt rules for the cure of all thoſe vices that are the diſeaſes of the mind, and for acquiring the habits of goodneſs, in which a ſound and healthful ſtate of ſoul conſiſts; inſtructs us in the right way, to glorify, and pleaſe, and worſhip God; and directs us how to eſcape the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

11. This

The circumſtances of the Chriſtian Church now, are very different from what they were in the beginning. The Church being, at that time, made up of perſons converted from the *Jewiſh* and *Heathen* Religions, a *Believer* ſignified no more than one that imbraced Chriſtianity, in oppoſition to the greater number who continued to reject it: which is ſo far from a reaſon, why it ſhould be imployed as a *diſcriminating Name* among Chriſtians, that it is a good reaſon for the contrary; ſince the name was common to all ſuch in the times of the *Apoſtles*. Nor, becauſe *Faith*, in the *New Teſtament*, does

11. This will ſupply us with an eaſy account, why we are ſaid *to be juſtified by Faith*, and *ſaved through Faith*. The reaſon in ſhort is, that under the Goſpel-Covenant, Faith, explained as before, is the only condition of juſtification and ſalvation. But, juſtification being our acquittance by Law, it may be aſked—How is it poſſible that we ſhould be juſtified, who have ſinned? Can we hope to be juſtified by a Law which we have tranſgreſſed? Does not the Law condemn all the tranſgreſſors of it? And can the Law, at once, condemn and juſtify? To clear this difficulty, we are to obſerve, that (excepting the Law, or Covenant of Grace) there never was any Law of God written, or unwritten, that promiſed eternal life to them that believe, notwithſtanding their having ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God.

It

does often occur as a ſummary expreſſion for all the *Chriſtian Virtues*, is it therefore proper, that we ſhould ordinarily take the word in the ſame latitude. As it was well known from the preaching of Chriſtianity, what manner of perſons they that believed in Chriſt, and profeſſed his Religion, ought to be; ſo it was charitably ſuppoſed of thoſe, who quitted the Religion of their Fathers for the ſake of this new Maſter, hereby expoſing themſelves to many inconveniences and dangers, that they were more than *nominal Chriſtians*.

And if, in any paſſages of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, a ſlight ſeems to be caſt on *Works* in compariſon of *Faith*, the *Works* meant are thoſe of the Law of *Moſes* which the *Judaizers* were for impoſing as alike neceſſary to ſalvation,

It is upon this principle the Apoſtle *Paul*'s reaſoning proceeds in the Epiſtles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, [i] *By the deeds of the Law there ſhall no Fleſh be juſtified in his ſight; for by the Law is the knowledge of ſin:* [k] *knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the Law.* It may be doubted, whether either of theſe places is juſtly tranſlated, ſince in both of them, the original words are εξ εργων νομε, *by works of Law*; (not *by the works of the Law*; which would have reſtrained the meaning to the Law of *Moſes*, emphatically ſtiled, *the Law*) there never was any ſuch Law as had this promiſe or declaration annexed to it, that whoever believeth in God, according to the diſcoveries he hath been pleaſed to make of himſelf, ſo as to ſerve him with ſincerity, ſhall be entitled to the pardon of all his paſt ſins immediately, and

tion, with obedience to the Goſpel of *Chriſt*. But how is this applicable to us, who poſſeſs the Chriſtian Religion as a ſort of *Inheritance*, are bred up in the belief of it, converſe altogether with thoſe of the ſame way, hazard nothing by our profeſſion, and have none among us that are in danger of revolting to *Judaiſm?* Is not the experience of ſo many years, not to ſay ages, ſufficient to convince us how very apt men are to flatter themſelves in their evil courſes, thinking themſelves ſafe enough, as long as they believe and truſt in Chriſt as their only Saviour? And ſhall the Miniſters of the Goſpel ſeem to countenance ſuch a fatal miſtake as this, by diſtinguiſhing the true diſciples of Jeſus from others, by the

[i] Rom. iii. 20. [k] Gal. ii. 16.

and to everlaſting happineſs in the life to come. The Law of *Moſes* had no ſuch promiſe as this belonging to it, nor the Law of Nature, nor any Law given to the Patriarchs. A title to eternal life, pleadable by Law (if to be had at all) was not to be had without producing a perfect, ſinleſs, obedience; of which man not being capable in his lapſed ſtate, the Pſalmiſt expoſtulates with God after this manner, [1] *Enter not into judgement with thy ſervant; for in thy ſight ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified.* No man could ſtand in judgement before God, were he ſevere to mark iniquity, and ſhould require perfection as the condition of eternal life; which he hath not obliged himſelf not to do by any other Covenant, but that of Grace.

It

the mere appellation of *Believers*, and excluding *Works of Evangelical Righteouſneſs*, from having any ſhare in recommending us to the divine acceptance? Do they reflect, how much they may undeſignedly contribute to the confirming of ſinners, in their unhappy ſelf-deluſion, by this means?

So early as the time of the Apoſtle *James*'s writing his Epiſtle, this abuſe of the doctrine of *Juſtification by Faith* began to ſpread its malignant influence, which is the reaſon of his expreſſing himſelf with ſuch a noble warmth, when he would ſhew the extreme folly and danger of truſting to *Faith* without *Works*. This, and other corruptions of the Chriſtian Doctrine, are grown to a much greater height in the preſent Age, which ſhould be a caution to all, who have a real concern for true and undefiled Religion, to be upon their guard againſt them.

[1] Pſal. cxliii. 2.

It is true, every ſincerely good man, under the light of nature, hath ground to hope, that God will be a rewarder of them that diligently, though imperfectly, ſeek him, in the world to come. But then, though he may humbly hope for a reward, he cannot claim it by virtue of any promiſe that God hath made him; much leſs can he claim ſuch an exceeding great and everlaſting reward as the Chriſtian. It is further certain, that *Abraham*'s Faith, who lived many ages before the coming of Chriſt, *was counted*, or imputed, *to him for righteouſneſs*; or, which is the ſame, he was juſtified by his Faith; he had none of his ſins imputed to him, to his condemnation, but his Faith imputed for Righteouſneſs; or, as that which gave him as ſure a title to eternal life, as a righteouſneſs every way perfect could have done.

But we are to conſider, that the Covenant of Grace bore date from the Fall; and that it was by virtue of this Covenant that good men have found acceptance in the ſeveral ages of the world. This Covenant is more openly and fully propoſed to the world in the Goſpel of Chriſt. It is the expreſs language of the Goſpel-law; [m] *He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation.* [n] *He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live: And whoſoever liveth*

[m] John v. 24. [n] xi. 25, 26.

liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never die, i. e. being raiſed from the dead at the general reſurrection, he ſhall die no more. [o] *Whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins. Believe on the Lord Jeſus, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* Many other places might be named of like import. Upon this account, the Goſpel is juſtly ſtiled, [p] *the Law of Faith*, requiring no more than a living Faith, as the condition of the favour and acceptance of God, and upon all thoſe who have this Faith, conferring a title to eternal life and happineſs.

And for as much as the Goſpel is, in this ſenſe, *a Law of Faith*, we are now very properly ſaid *to be juſtified by Faith.* He is juſtified whom the Law pronounces righteous; the Law pronounces thoſe righteous, and thoſe only, who fulfil it; by Faith (including ſincere obedience) we fulfil the Law of Chriſt, as a Covenant of Immortality: and being thus become evangelically righteous, we have a title to all the bleſſings of the Covenant, to the forgiveneſs of our ſins, to the aſſiſtances of the Spirit, and to eternal life. The Law itſelf, which we are now under, gives us this title. And therefore, certainly, there is now a great deal of propriety in the expreſſion *of our being juſtified by Faith*, ſince Faith is the fulfilling of the whole Goſpel-law; which requires no more than an obediential Faith, as the neceſſary condition

[o] Acts x. 43. [p] Rom. iii. 27.

condition of a glorious immortality. Thus we are juſtified by Law, and yet juſtified *freely by the Grace of God*; it being the free and rich Grace of God that hath eſtabliſhed this Law, that *whoſoever believeth ſhall be juſtified and ſaved*; and through the redemption that is in Chriſt, or the atonement made by Chriſt, that the Grace of God hath expreſſed itſelf in this wonderful manner to the ſinful children of men; Faith too being only the condition, which though it bears no manner of proportion to the reward, God is pleaſed of his great goodneſs, through the mediation of his well-beloved Son, to accept, as the beſt thing ſuch frail, ſinful creatures as we are capable of performing.

From what hath been now ſaid, I would obſerve, that the phraſe of *Juſtification by Faith*, is more properly uſed under the Goſpel Diſpenſation than it could have been before. Thoſe that feared God, and eſchewed evil, were always under a Covenant of Grace; by means of which, they were juſtified or treated as righteous in the ſight of God. But, before the times of the Goſpel, there was no Law ſolemnly promulgated, which clearly and expreſly promiſed the pardon of ſin, and eternal life to believing penitent ſinners. This, which was only implied in the promiſe of a great Deliverer, is plainly and expreſly revealed in the Goſpel; ſo that now, according to the very letter of the Goſpel, all that be-

lieve, have, what may be called, a *legal title* to the pardon of their sins, and the happiness of their whole man, soul and body, to eternity; which could not be said in regard of those pious persons who lived under former Dispensations of Religion.

111. Let us give diligent heed, that we be found among those to whom the *Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.* Our only title to salvation, is Faith; the only evidence of true Faith, is a sincere, universal, persevering obedience. Will our Faith stand this test? Happy we if it will! Otherwise, without a change in our condition, most miserable; whatever vain hopes and imaginations we may buoy ourselves up with. Do I act as one who believes the Gospel to be a Divine Revelation; making it the rule of my life, of my affections, of my pursuits; my armour of defence against every temptation; my greatest treasure, and best delight in the days of my prosperity; my chief, my sufficient support in adversity; and my guide and counsellor in every condition, relation, and change of life? It will signify but little to talk of my Faith, if, notwithstanding all my Faith, I live as those who have none; for as the Apostle *Paul* tells the *Jews*, who rested in their Circumcision; [t] *Circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the Law; but if thou be a breaker of the Law, thy Circumcision is made Uncir-*

[t] Rom. ii. 25.

Uncircumcision: the like may be said of Faith, that it is infinitely profitable, if by it a man is perſuaded to obey the Goſpel; but if thou obey not the Goſpel, thy Faith hereby, as to the effect, is made unbelief. It can ſignify nothing, as was ſaid juſt now; by which is meant, that it can ſignify nothing to thy ſalvation, but will ſignify a great deal to aggravate thy guilt and condemnation. *Let us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe being left us, of entering into reſt, any of us ſhould fall ſhort of it*, through want of this Faith.

IV. Let us endeavour to be continually building ourſelves up in our moſt holy Faith. It will be an honour to have it ſaid of us, that *our Faith groweth exceedingly*; as the Apoſtle *Paul* bleſſes God, that of the *Theſſalonians* did. Faith is capable of increaſe in ſeveral reſpects. It may be more explicit as to its *object*, more ſtedfaſt as to its *principle*, more intenſe as to the *act*, and more efficacious in its *influence*.

As to its *object*, Faith may be more explicit. This at leaſt may be affirmed of the generality of Chriſtians. They do not know ſo much in Religion, but they may know ſtill more, if they apply themſelves to reading and meditation, as well as attend to, and reflect upon what they hear. Now in the ſame proportion as knowledge encreaſes, Faith doth ſo too; conſidered as a diſtinct, explicit aſſent to this or that particular truth.

The belief of all revealed truth, is involved in the belief of the Scripture; but as the belief of the Scripture is not only conſiſtent with the ignorance of many things therein diſcovered, but even with errors and miſtakes about them; (for while I believe that no Scripture-Doctrine is falſe, I may not believe this or that to be a Doctrine of Scripture which is really ſo; or, on the contrary, may believe that to be a Scripture-Doctrine which is not) it is therefore highly expedient that we ſhould examine ourſelves, in this ſenſe, whether we are in the Faith; whether what we believe is true, and whether we believe the whole Truth (the whole of that Truth which, it is highly expedient, we ſhould be acquainted with) or only a part of it; being, perhaps, ignorant of ſome things of great uſe and importance to be known. This is adding knowledge to our Faith, according to the exhortation of the Apoſtle [u] *Peter*, and to one degree of knowledge another.

As to its *principle*, Faith may be more ſtedfaſt. We may be more rooted in Chriſt, and eſtabliſhed in the Faith; not ſo eaſily moved from the hope of the Goſpel; better perſuaded in our minds of the truth of Chriſtianity, and of the ſeveral important Doctrines of it.

Faith may be more intenſe as to the *act*; may have a greater livelineſs and vigour in it.

[u] ii Pet. i. 5.

it. When we think of the great and glorious things we believe, the operations of the mind about them, may be more collected, and attended with greater force, and so more suitable to the vast weight and consequence of them; the act may have a greater conformity to the object. Finally;

Our Faith may be more efficacious in its *influence*; and will naturally be so, when improved in all the former respects. [w] *Is not my word like fire? saith the Lord.* In like manner, our Faith in this word, may be as fire within us, by which our souls are warmed and agitated; if not immediately, yet by kindling that love which is fitly compared to fire. We may be more sensible of its influence in the ordinary duties of life, in all things willing to keep a good conscience, and abounding in the acts and exercises of every virtue, while Faith directs and animates us. And as to the more solemn duties and offices of Religion, we may perform them with greater attention of mind, and with more life and spirit and devotion; and should actualy do so, if Faith produced its genuine effects.

That we may not want *Saving Faith*, and that we may be continually growing in it, the following *Directions* may be of use.

[w] Jer. xxiii. 29.

1. Let us be conſtant in our applications to the throne of heavenly Grace; and frequently make this the ſubject of our Prayers to God, That he would increaſe and actuate our Faith. Prayer hath a natural tendency to ſtrengthen our belief in God: for what is Prayer, but an addreſs to this inviſible Being? And what are the things that chiefly imploy and fill the mind in this duty, but thoſe of a ſpiritual nature, which are objects of Faith only? Conſequently, ſuch an exerciſe as this of Prayer, ſeriouſly and devoutly performed, in which we ſpeak to God as a Being every where preſent, ready to hear, and able to help us; and labour with all our might, to fix the attention of our ſouls on thoſe things for which the Goſpel teaches us to pray, and to poſſeſs ourſelves with a deep ſenſe of their reality and importance; ſuch an exerciſe as this repeated every day, muſt be of admirable uſe to familiarize the objects of Faith to the mind. And the more familiar theſe objects become, the greater ſtrength and efficacy will our Faith about them naturally acquire.

And then, if to this we remember to add fervent Prayer to God, and humble reliance upon him for his *Spirit*, in order to make Faith, and every other good principle, flouriſh and abound in us, we ſhall find our Faith to receive great advantage from hence. By all thoſe who believe the doc-

doctrine of *Divine Assistance* (as for for my own part, I know of no Christians that do not, though they may explain it differently) no doubt can be made, that the souls of men are inwardly assisted in *believing*, as well as in other acts and duties of the christian life. How this *Assistance* is communicated, it may be difficult, perhaps impossible, to give a very particular account. But that in general, there is such an *Assistance* vouchsafed, is very *probable* from the reason of the thing, and *certain* from the Gospel Revelation. He that by his Grace helpeth our other infirmities, will mercifully succour the weakness of our Faith. This he can do both by enlightning the mind with a clearer discernment of the motives of believing, and setting the soul more at liberty from those corrupt prejudices, and irregular affections, which are the main temptations to doubting and unbelief. And, besides these two ways, which are purely moral, there is the greatest reason to think, that the Father of Spirits, who created the soul, and indowed it with all it's faculties, can by an immediate *influx* or *operation*, support and cherish any good principle and inclination in the soul; and all this, which God by his *Spirit* is undoubtedly able to do, it is reasonable to expect he will do, in answer to the earnest and frequently repeated Prayers of humble and upright souls;

their own prudent and faithful endeavours being all along supposed to concur.

I heartily agree with an eminent Writer * in the distinction between a *certainty of adherence*, and a *certainty of evidence*; and that God is ready to give his servants the former, as well as the latter. As to what he further adds in explaining this matter, that to those that believe and live according to their Faith, he gives, by degrees, the Spirit of obsignation and confirmation, which makes them know (though *how* they know not) what they did but believe; and to be as fully and resolutely assured of the Gospel of Christ, as those that heard it from Christ himself with their ears, saw it with their eyes, and whose hands handled the word of life: as to this, what he asserts is more questionable; not to observe the impropriety of calling such a persuasion by the name of *knowledge*, which never can exceed the *motives* and *reasons* of assent, though Faith may. But however that be, that Faith may be raised to a kind of certainty, in opposition to that doubting, which rational evidence, being alone, might leave upon the mind, I see no ground to dispute. Nor that this is sometimes actually the case; for since there are frequently such doubts as do not arise from any counter-evidence, but from the influence of the body, its temper and senses, and passions, what

* *Chillingworth's* Safe Way.

what forbids us to ſuppoſe a ſatisfaction and acquieſcence of mind, that is notwholly the immediate effect of evidence, but of the *Spirit's* operations, in order to ballance the former?

11. Let us take heed how we act counter to our Faith in any particular branch or inſtance of it; for this may be of dangerous conſequence; and from acting as if we did not believe this, and that, we may come not to believe it, or at beſt to make a doubt of it. Take an example or two. Would we preſerve in our minds a firm belief of the Omnipreſence and infinite Knowledge of God? Let us not indulge to ſuch freedoms in our moſt retired actions, or even our moſt ſecret thoughts and deſires, as do not well agree with ſuch a belief. Would we not doubt of the Providence of God, directing the affairs of the world, of the church, and of every particular perſon, ſo that even the moſt unlikely appearances ſhall come out well at laſt? Let us not give ourſelves leave to be uneaſy and diſcontented, when any thing happens out contrary to our wiſhes and expectations, or what we were apt to fancy was evidently fit and expedient. Is there any duty, or ſin of which we have at preſent no doubt, although tempted to commit that ſin, or to neglect that duty? Let us upon no pretence comply with the temptation. For inſtance, we are as yet very well ſatisfied, that ſhewing the Death

Death of Chriſt in the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, is a duty incumbent on the Church of Chriſt 'till his *ſecond* coming. But who can tell how long this will be our opinion, evident as this truth is in the Word of God, if we go on pleading one frivolous excuſe, or other, for the neglect of this plain Inſtitution? That our conſciences may not reproach us for living in the omiſſion of a known duty, when the uſual excuſes for it begin to fail us, and our diſinclination by time is more confirmed than ever; ſhall we not be ready to diſpute, whether the duty be ſo plain as we once thought it, or at leaſt, whether it be of univerſal obligation, or of very conſiderable uſe and importance? Shall we not be willing to conclude that, though we cannot do quite ſo well without it, yet it may be diſpenſed with; and having grown old in the neglect, at laſt caſt aſide all thoughts of it?

At firſt, we believe that all fraud and cozenage, under whatever ſhape and name it may concealed, is forbidden by the law of common juſtice, and much more by the Goſpel of Chriſt. But there is no great probability that this will always continue to be our Faith, if, as often as we find ourſelves under a ſtrong temptation, we take a licence to go beyond and defraud another in any matter. To keep our Faith whole and inviolate, it is therefore of the greateſt importance

portance that we maintain our practice so. The more scrupulous we are of transgressing in the least instances, the obligations that our Faith lays us under, the more firmly established shall we be in the Faith, and be assaulted with much fewer temptations, and those much weaker too, to doubt of the truth of any very considerable article, or plain precept of the Gospel.

III. Let us be sure not to judge after the sight of our eyes; that is, let us not make sense the measure of the reality and importance of things. We cannot slide into an error more dangerous than this; one more destructive to the belief or practice of Religion. Once we entertain such a thought as this, that we have reason to doubt of the truth of what we do not see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and that sensible things are the most substantial and of the greatest concernment to us, it will, if we follow it, lead us into the tents of libertines and sinners. And, if we give any incouragement at all to such a sceptical humour, we shall be tempted to follow it much too far. Let us therefore consider as the *danger*, so the *unreasonableness* of this way of judging. The *danger* of it lies in this, that it naturally issues in infidelity, and all ungodliness of living. The *unreasonableness* of it appears from hence, that sense is one of the lowest faculties

ties in human nature; and cannot therefore be intended for the ſupreme and ultimate rule of judging, nor without the greateſt abſurdity be made ſo by us.

By ſenſe we know as little as brute creatures do. It is owing to Reaſon, if we excel them in any thing. We have more knowledge than they, becauſe we have ſouls indowed with Reaſon and Underſtanding. Now ſhall we, can we doubt, whether we have ſuch ſouls, becauſe they are not ſubject to the notice of ſenſe? We may as well doubt, whether we have Reaſon and Underſtanding, becauſe theſe are things that cannot be ſeen, though the effects of them may. The like argument we have of the Exiſtence and Providence of an Inviſible God. Senſe beholds a thouſand things which Reaſon conſiders as the manifeſt effects and proofs of infinite power, wiſdom and goodneſs, in the creation and government of the world. And the ſame Reaſon will convince us that theſe inviſible Beings, God and the ſoul of man, are of much greater dignity and excellence than any viſible things can be; that God infinitely ſurpaſſes all other Beings, and that the human ſoul, tho infinitely inferior to its great original, is yet incomparably above the whole corporeal world. It is becauſe theſe Beings exiſt that are out of ſight, that there are any ſuch things as thoſe we ſee, which depending upon the

the former, as effects on their causes, motions on the mover, and external actions on the living thinking agent, must therefore be less noble.

Let me inquire with all the diligence I can into the idea of Matter, I find not thought and self-activity among its properties. Nay, the more curiously I examine, the more fully I am convinced, that they must belong to some immaterial Being. It is true, in the *material Universe*, all things are full of labour, man cannot utter it; hardly any thing is at rest in the heavens, or on the earth, in the great bodies of the visible world, or in the minuter parts that compose them. And what is the spring of all this motion, but some *spiritual Being* more exellent than other things, because it knows, rules and actuates them; and likewise, because being spiritual, it is indivisible and immortal? It is evident that the soul of man is so; much more that Supreme Intelligence, and First Mover, whose offspring the soul is.

And as we have no just ground to doubt of the existence of God, and of our own souls, though both invisible, so it would be absurd to question the reality of an invisible world, or the truth of that Religion, by which this unseen world is brought to light; because this other world is not discoverable by our senses, and the persons that first taught the

the Chriſtian Religion, and the things reported to have been done by them were never known to us. At this rate, we may arraign the truth of all hiſtory, and deny thoſe things in which all relations agree; as whether there be ſuch Cities and Countries in the world, where we never were ourſelves; or ſuch or ſuch perſons are living now, or lived in former ages, of whoſe names and actions we have often heard and read, while we were never acquainted with their perſons.

If Reaſon and Argument weigh any thing (and ſurely they ought to have the greateſt weight with reaſonable Beings) the truth of thoſe things upon which the Chriſtian Religion is founded, cannot be contradicted; ſince the witneſſes are every way credible, and in great number, and a great many things concur to confirm their teſtimony. And, Chriſtianity being once admitted to be a Divine Revelation, we have the joint evidence of Reaſon and Scripture to eſtabliſh us in the belief of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. And why ſhould ſuch a ſtate of things be thought incredible? Only becauſe it is beyond the reach of ſenſe? But are not all future things in this world alike concealed from ſenſe? We believe the Sun will riſe and ſet tomorrow; but we do not now ſee it riſing and ſetting then. We may therefore as well

well doubt of all futurities in time, as of those of eternity. Sensible and present things then, for no other reason than that they are present and sensible, are not the most real. Neither are they of the greatest importance, the importance of things depending on the relation they have to our highest happiness and the length of their duration; in respect of both which there is no comparison between the things of this present time, and that exceeding and eternal weight of glory, of which all good men are in expectation.

IV. Let us walk more by Faith; for this will greatly tend to the further increase and establishment of it. Walking, or living by Faith, implies these three things, *Affection*, *Meditation*, and *Action*.

1. *Affection* to those things of the superior goodness and excellence of which we are assured by Faith. We are to endeavour to have the temper and relish of our minds suited to spiritual things; to set our affections on things above, things of a divine and heavenly nature, above the sphere of sense, and conception of sensual and worldly minds. Let the happiness we chuse consist in mental injoyments, in the pleasures of virtue and devotion, in the perfection of our intellectual nature, and the exercise of our noblest faculties about the best and noblest objects. Our choice being directed to such a happiness as this, the more intensely we

pursue

purſue it, the better diſpoſed will our minds be to receive the evidences of our holy Religion; all the *Diſcoveries*, *Principles* and *Duties* of which, are ſo exactly co-incident with the notion of a ſpiritual felicity. In proportion as our affections are more ſpiritualized, the eye of Faith will become more clear and piercing, and its wings will ſhoot out, ſo as to be able to ſupport its flight above this inferior world, and all its temptations.

11. Another thing implied in walking by Faith, is frequent *Meditation* on the things we believe. Meditation is the beſt nurſe of Faith. By turning away our eyes from beholding vanity, and accuſtoming ourſelves to the contemplation of that wondrous ſcene of things which Faith diſplays before us, we ſhall make it leſs difficult to conceive of theſe things; they will not appear ſuch ſtrange things to us, and hereupon we ſhall be leſs inclined to call in queſtion their reality; and, as perſons that have converſed in a great light, ſhall diſcern no beauty or glory in the objects of this dark world. Every Chriſtian hath another world to which he belongs, and in which he ſhould live and converſe, beſides this which he is born into, and ſhares with the reſt of mankind. Into this world he ſhould often ſtep aſide; it is not

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at ſuch a diſtance from him, but that he can do it in a moment, by only forgeting the world about him, and ſtrongly turning the eye of his mind inward. Here let his thoughts dwell for a time, paſs with wonder and delight from one object to another; now entertain themſelves with the perfections of God, now with the virtues and offices of the Redeemer, his paſt ſufferings, and his preſent glory; now with the privileges of good men in this life, then with their happineſs in the life to come; now with one doctrine of Chriſtianity, then with another, and ſometimes with the certainty and divine excellence of the whole Religion. It is only our being diſuſed to ſuch Meditations that renders the aſſent we give to things ſpiritual and heavenly, ſo weak and wavering.

III. The laſt thing implied in walking by Faith, is a uniform courſe of holy and good *Actions*. Let us every day, and all the day long, live and act under the laws of the eternal world. Let the character of a diſciple of Jeſus, a child of God, and an heir and expectant of heaven, be viſible in our general conduct, and in every particular part of it. What a ſtability would this give to our Faith, as Faith ſignifies a perſuaſion of the truth of Chriſtianity, and of thoſe glorious and important objects that are diſcovered by it?

I ſhall mention but one conſideration by way of *motive* to all this, and that is taken from the advantages and pleaſures attending a life of Faith; too many to be eaſily reckoned up, and too great to be lightly eſteemed by any one who underſtands his own intereſt, or hath a juſt regard to the glory of God, and the happineſs of his fellow-creatures; the moſt undiſturbed peace, the moſt ſatisfying delights, the greateſt variety of entertainment, a ſtability of mind, order, activity and uſefulneſs, in the life. Theſe and the like are the uſual effects of living by Faith*. But then, that Faith may have its full influence, and produce all the pleaſure that naturally flows from it, it is ſuppoſed that we have not only Faith, but likewiſe ſome degree of Aſſurance: for although we are thoroughly perſuaded of the truth of the Goſpel, and love and practiſe the truth we believe; and, upon this, are immediately accepted of God, and intitled to everlaſting ſalvation; yet as long as we doubt of our own ſincerity, theſe doubts, however cauſeleſs (or harmleſs in reſpect of our future ſtate) will rob us of that peace, comfort and ſatisfaction, which our Faith would otherwiſe afford us. Let us therefore labour after Aſſurance, indeavouring to get a right notion of ourſelves, as well as of Religion,

* See MEDITATION V.

gion, and guarding againſt every thing that is a hindrance to it; as for inſtance, an unevenneſs of converſation, or the dark ſuggeſtions of a melancholy temper of body. Let us take care not to give occaſion for any doubts that are juſt and reaſonable; and then, let us diſcourage, as much as we can, all unreaſonable, unaccountable doubts, and fears, and ſuſpicions, about ourſelves; at the ſame time making it our earneſt requeſt to God, that he would ſhine in upon our ſouls, and give us joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt.

MEDITATION I.

On the Life of Jeſus.

IF the Son of God were to make his appearance among men, in order to reduce them from their wanderings, and teach them the way of life, to give them a contempt for the riches, pleaſures and honours of this world, and to call them off to the hope and purſuit of glory and immortality in a better; what part ſhould I expect him to act, what character to put on, what temper and virtues to diſcover? What but the very ſame that our Lord and Maſter Jeſus Chriſt actually did; who challenged the title of the Son of God, and proved the goodneſs of his claim by his life? Worthy he, to be the Son of ſuch a Father; worthy therefore to be received by us under that character. Can I think that Perſon a *Deceiver*, whoſe every action ſhews him void of all ambitious and worldly views; who was an example of every virtue he taught his followers, of the moſt exalted piety and devotion, the moſt fervent zeal for God and love to him, the moſt conſtant truſt in his Providence, and intire obedience

dience and resignation to his will; meek and lowly in heart, as ready to forgive injuries done him by others, as remote from doing any wrong himself; holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; subject to his earthly Parent, obedient to the Civil Magistrate, and free, humane and condescending to all; whose charity imbraced the whole world of mankind for its object, and was so transcendently great, in respect of its degree, as to make him willing to die for them; to die the shameful, the painful, and the accursed death of the cross? And, how did he behave at his death? Just after the same manner as he had done all his life. He prayed for his enemies, called God *his Father* to the last, and breathed forth his innocent soul into his hands.

If all these appearances may deceive me, what marks and characters can I have to distinguish betwixt truth and falsehood? He must have been an *Impostor*, or the *Son of God.* That he was no *Impostor* we have all the certainty that can be had in a matter of this nature. And if it be said that he might be an *Enthusiast*, one who did not designedly put a cheat upon the world, but was deceived himself by his own imagination; it is enough to say, that the wisdom, which ran with so even a thread through all his discourses, and all his actions, which were all uniform and consistent from

the beginning to the end, makes ſuch a ſuggeſtion highly *improbable*, as the miracles he made a ſhew of working proves it to be *impoſſible*. For either, he really wrought theſe miracles, or he did not; if he did not, he muſt know that he did not; and ſo was not an *Enthuſiaſt*, but an *Impoſtor*, or *Deceiver*. But this his life will not ſuffer us to think of him; from whence I conclude, that both his miracles and his virtues were real, and he himſelf the *Son of God*. In this light, O my Saviour, I ſee light; my Faith knows thee by the glory that ſurrounds thee; and, convinced of the truth of thy miſſion, and the divinity of thy Perſon, I cry out, as that tranſported diſciple, *my Lord* and *my God!*

MEDI-

MEDITATION II.

On the Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion.

YE *are compleat in him*, ſaith the great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, writing to ſome who had entered themſelves among the followers of Jeſus Chriſt. And indeed what is there to be deſired and expected in a divine Revelation, and that the laſt and moſt perfect that God will make to mankind, that is not found in the Goſpel? The Goſpel undertakes not to inſtruct men in the arts of worldly gain, in political knowledge and ſkill, or in the rules of human eloquence, and the ſpeculations of philoſophy. It was infinitely beneath the character of the Son of God to ſet up for a teacher of ſuch things. Things of this nature are not of ſufficient importance to claim a place in a Revelation, deſigned to recover a lapſed race of creatures out of a ſtate of ignorance, and guilt, and corruption, and to prepare them for immortal bleſſedneſs.

In a religious capacity, or as to all things neceſſary to everlaſting ſalvation, we are

perfect and intire, lacking nothing; that is, we have a perfect Religion, how imperfect ſoever we ourſelves are. And a very great advantage it is to have a perfect rule; ſince at the ſame time that it makes us more ſenſible of the many defects we labour under, it puts us in a way to be more and more freed from them. Mankind had loſt their way to happineſs; how ſhall they find it again? They had almoſt univerſally revolted from their duty and allegiance to their Almighty Sovereign, the Maker and Governor of the Univerſe; how ſhall they recover his favour, and be taught the way to worſhip and ſerve, ſo as to pleaſe him? To theſe, and ſuch like queſtions, the Chriſtian Religion returns a ſatisfactory anſwer; alike adapted to convince perſons of all capacities, and provides a remedy equal to the diſeaſe.

Whereſoever this Religion came, it ſubdued idolatry and ſuperſtition, erected the ſtandard of the croſs, and planted truth, and virtue, and goodneſs in the earth. It declared to men that Supreme and Inviſible Power, whom they either *not at all*, or *ignorantly* worſhiped, and who was become a ſort of *unknown God* among thoſe reaſonable Beings that were the work of his hands; eſtabliſhed a worſhip pure, ſimple and ſpiritual; ſhewed them the divine nature in the moſt amiable, and the moſt awful light,

light, cloathed with perfection and glory ineffable, ſo as to challenge adoration, to incourage prayer, and truſt and dependance, and to invite imitation. Chriſtianity gives us a view of human nature, as fallen from its original dignity, yet, by the Grace of God, capable of recovering its purity, and with that, of attaining to glory, honour, and immortality, and the perfection of bleſſedneſs.

Here we have the beſt and nobleſt end, the glory of God in the final happineſs of man; and the ſureſt and moſt excellent means for the accompliſhing this end, by humility, ſelf-denial, purity, mortification to the world, by the love of God and our neighbour, by the practice of virtue, and the exerciſes of a ſober and rational, yet exalted devotion. Here are the moſt perfect rules, the moſt uſeful inſtitutions, the divineſt examples, the moſt powerful aſſiſtances, the moſt glorious proſpects, the moſt abundant conſolations. Here is ſight for the blind, health for the diſeaſed, liberty for the ſlave and the captive, and pardon and life for the wretch under condemnation. Here is enough to entertain the devout and thoughtful mind, to calm the troubled conſcience, to relieve the anxious, to ſatisfy the doubting, and to raiſe and comfort the timorous, the dejected, the

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sorrowful soul. Are not all these so many characters of Divinity? Let us suppose God to speak to mankind; and how would he speak to them but after this very manner? None are discouraged but those that ought to be so, the presumptuously wicked, the hypocritical, the impenitent; while every thing conspires to ingage mens indeavours to become good, and to hearten and animate all that are so. When I reflect on these things, I find my self obliged to say, as the great Apostle before cited, *yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.* Let me know Christ, and I know more than the wisest of the sons of men, who are destitute of this knowledge.— Only suppose the Religion of Jesus to be faithfully represented in the lives of the professors of it; not of a few here and there, who are lost in the much greater number that disgrace their profession, but of the whole body of Christians; and all men, who beheld such a sight, heaven descending upon earth, would quickly become his disciples.

MEDI-

MEDITATION III.

On the Goſpel-Salvation.

LET me raiſe my thoughts as high, and ſpread them as wide as I can, I find after all, ſuch are the heigths and depths, the lengths and breadths, of this ſalvation, as well as of the love that procured it, as to ſurpaſs my comprehenſion. *Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* This ſalvation is begun in the preſent life. The ſoul is immediately freed from the guilt, and from the dominion of ſin; which being moral evils, evils peculiar to the ſoul, which is a free intelligent principle, capable of knowing and doing that which is good and acceptable in the ſight of God, or the contrary; evils inconſiſtent with the perfection of the ſoul, and with the natural order and right exerciſe of its faculties, and conſequently with its peace and happineſs; freedom from them muſt, upon all theſe accounts, be exceeding deſireable.

The ſoul is now, in ſome degree, reſtored to the poſſeſſion of itſelf, eaſed of its diſquietudes, and delivered from the bondage of guilty fears and corrupt inclinations; the

the conſcience is clean, the will in a ſtate of rectitude, comparitively ſpeaking, and all the affections move regularly. We have not only a right and title to eternal life by the promiſe of God, but we have the Spirit of God as the pledge and earneſt of it too. *Now are we the ſons of God*, glorious privilege, and *it does not yet appear what we ſhall be:* only *this we know, that when he*, our Saviour, *ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, becauſe we ſhall ſee him as he is*; ſo like him as we never yet were, liker to him than was man in innocence. At preſent this ſalvation is imperfect in the beſt; hereafter it ſhall be conſummated in all. Here the ſoul itſelf is ſaved but in part and knows and loves, and injoys God but in part; there are great remains of ignorance, of weakneſs, of corruption, and therefore of diſſatisfaction. In the world to come, the ſoul ſhall be ſaved by the intire deſtruction of the very being of ſin, it ſhall be ſaved from temptations to ſin; and from all the unhappy effects and conſequences of ſin; from every grief, and fear, vexation and diſturbance; have all the knowledge of which it is capable, and feel a vigour of holy affection anſwerable to its knowledge: and together with the ſoul, the body too ſhall partake of this ſalvation and be perfect in its kind and degree. Here the body of the good man, that body which is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt,

Ghoſt, labours under the ſame natural infirmities and imperfections, and is liable to the ſame accidents and diſeaſes, and pains, and death, as the bodies of other men.

At death all theſe imperfections and ſufferings are at an end; and at the reſurrection, the body being framed anew, enters upon a ſtate of eaſe, and pleaſure, and injoyment; *it is ſown in corruption, it ſhall be raiſed in incorruption; it is ſown in diſhonour, it ſhall be raiſed in glory; it is ſown in weakneſs, it ſhall be raiſed in power; it is ſown a natural body, and raiſed a ſpiritual body:* and *when this corruptible ſhall put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, death is ſwallowed up in victory.* This is the laſt time, the cloſe and finiſhing of the works of Providence in relation to the race of mankind, when the ſalvation of the people of God ſhall be revealed in its full glory, and they ſhall receive that heavenly, incorruptible, undefiled, and never-fading inheritance, to the hope of which they are now begotten.

The time of this world's duration (ſhort as it is in compariſon of eternity) hath been divided into a great many ages or generatiſions of men, diverſified by perpetual changes in the courſe of things; as every man's life is into different periods, filled with different events, often melancholy and afflictive. The

next

next world ſhall have no ſuch viciſſitudes, no ſuch diſagreeable variety; they that are born from the dead ſhall die no more; in reſpect of which, eternity will be, as it were, but one age, or rather one eternal, unchanging day. There ſhall be no night, no cloud to eclipſe the light of God's countenance, no unhappy occurrence to interrupt the joy of the bleſſed, no jarring in their heavenly ſociety, no coldneſs in their friendſhip, no danger of falling from their happy ſtate, no proſpect of an end. This is a ſalvation indeed, well deſerving the name. This is happineſs, or it is impoſſible to conceive of any ſuch thing.

When I enter into the preſence of God, what will be the ſentiments of joy, and love, and wonder, and adoration, that will crowd upon me all at once! When I ſee him whom I love, and who hath loved me much more, my Saviour, the only begotten of the Father, how ſurprizingly agreeable will the ſight be! This is he who bought me with his blood! He for whom I have ſo long waited! It was a pleaſure to think of my Redeemer, it is a much greater to behold him. I rejoyce to mingle with thoſe happy ſpirits that ſurround his throne, and to join my praiſes and proſtrations with theirs. Hail bleſſed world! And all ye bleſt inhabitants of it, hail! Thanks to that kind Redeemer who left theſe bliſsful manſions to dwell with men, and aſcending hither again,

again, opened a way for them to follow! Thanks to that free, that almighty Grace, that hath brought me hither, in ſpite of all the enemies that endeavoured to ſtop my paſſage, and the many difficulties and temptations I had to ſurmount! At length, I am paſt them all. —Thanks to you ye miniſtring Spirits, who have been ſo ready to guard me through the dangerous paths of mortal life, and to do me every friendly office in your power. —I think myſelf happy in the friendſhip and acquaintance of ſuch exalted Beings, the original poſſeſſors of this heavenly world, who yet rejoice to ſee imbodied Spirits, a colony from a remote and inferior part of the creation, ſettled here, and filling the vacant ſeats of thoſe of your order that abode not in their firſt ſtation. —Nor am I a little pleaſed to meet you, O ye Saints of antient and later times, ye Worthies that once lived in yonder terreſtrial world, clothed with bodies of fleſh, and encompaſt with infirmities, like myſelf! With tranſport I behold ſuch a multitude without number, more than conquerors, celebrating their triumph over ſin, ſatan and the world, by the blood of the Lamb. But, O my ſoul, whither have thy thoughts carried thee? Thy time is not yet come to join that divine aſſembly, but I truſt it will; and in view of it, can patiently wait till my warfare is accompliſhed, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

MEDI-

MEDITATION IV.

On the wiſdom of looking to a future ſtate of happineſs, and framing our whole conduct under the influence of it.

SURELY, O my ſoul, for the ſake of ſuch a happineſs as that thou haſt been now ſurveying, it muſt be richly worth my while to venture all I have here below, to ſacrifice every thing elſe, rather than quit my hopes of this bleſſed ſtate; and deem nothing too difficult to be done, or too painful to be ſuffered, when the iſſue is ſo glorious! Alas, what talk I of *venturing?* I really ſecure that portion which is beſt for me at preſent, and fix my happineſs for eternity. I ſacrifice nothing in ſacrificing life itſelf, and the deareſt injoyments of life; I only exchange the ſhadows of felicity for the ſubſtance, and a temporal life for one that is eternal.

It is true, I muſt live by rule; and is there any quiet and ſatisfaction without it? There

There are ſome ſelf-denials I muſt undergo in a courſe of virtue and religion; but for theſe, abſtracting from the conſideration of a future reward, virtue and religion themſelves make abundant compenſation; and therefore, it muſt be my wiſdom to devote myſelf to them. How much more when I conſider whither they lead? And is any thing more then neceſſary to inflame my zeal, and ingage my reſolution? Alas, it is not from any want of arguments, that all are not prevailed on to ſet out in this glorious courſe! But here's the unhappineſs; the ſalvation of the Goſpel is, for the greater part, future, lies out of ſight, and conſiſts in things of a refined and ſpiritual nature, while men themſelves are carnal, and not eaſily able to raiſe their thoughts, much leſs their affections, above the ſphere of material objects, and ſenſible injoyments. This indeed is a diſadvantage on the ſide of the Chriſtian's happineſs; but where elſe would be the virtue of chooſing it? Did not our ſenſes, and imaginations, and paſſions, and appetites, prejudice us in favour of preſent things, it would be morally impoſſible not to purſue a divine, heavenly and eternal felicity, every man's *Reaſon* always giving it for this; ſo that there would be no trial in the caſe; which is what God deſigns in placing the ſoul in an earthly body, and in a world abounding with objects ſuitable to the ſenſes and capacities of that body.

What if this ſalvation be future, and moſtly ſpiritual? Ought that to be made an objection againſt it? Let me conſider the matter a little, and I ſhall not think ſo. As to the futurity of it, how little is that to be regarded, when though future it is certain, as certain as a matter of this nature can be made. The time will come, when what is future will be preſent, and preſent things be paſt. We know this beforehand, and ought therefore to be influenced by it accordingly. In other caſes, where two ſorts of injoyments are to ſucceed one after the other, if thoſe that come laſt are but a little ſuperior to the other, and to indure but for a little longer time, it is reckoned a point of prudence to prefer them, though at the price of foregoing the others, that we may have our beſt things laſt. Nay, if there are both good things, and evil propoſed to be injoyed and ſuffered, we chuſe to have our evil things firſt, and our good things afterwards; at leaſt, all that act wiſely do ſo, becauſe they reaſon very juſtly, that the good things injoyed firſt would but give the greater weight and ſting to the evil things, while the evil things being firſt paſt through will contribute to raiſe the value of the good things, and make them reliſh better.

Were it only that the happineſs of heaven is laſt, ſhould I not prefer it? How much more when it is greater than any preſent earthly

ly happineſs by infinite odds, and not only laſt, but everlaſting? And for the evil things allotted me, better have theſe now; eſpecially when, by patiently ſubmitting to the difficulties, and pains and ſufferings that Religion may occaſion me in the world, I increaſe my happineſs to eternity — Nor let it be objected, that the happineſs of the Chriſtian is ſpiritual and heavenly. In the ballance of Reaſon, this objection is lighter than vanity. If it be ſpiritual, it is then ſuited to the capacities of a ſpirit, ſuch as my ſoul is; from whence it follows, that a ſpiritual happineſs is the proper happineſs of my ſoul. And if my ſoul is happy, ſo am I; for the ſoul is the man, not the body; this is but the inſtrument by which it acts, the houſe in which it dwells, the medium by which it receives impreſſions from ſurrounding objects. And all the ſenſations, which the ſoul hath immediately by the body, are of a lower kind, ſome of them of the loweſt, fit only to try the ſoul while it is in the body, and to make it contented with its lot; whereas the pleaſures of the ſoul, as a ſpiritual and immortal ſubſtance, are the rewards beſtowed upon it, for ſubduing the body, and not ſuffering itſelf to be intoxicated and corrupted by the pleaſures of it.

And as for any pleaſures, not directly mental, that may be any way ſubſervient to thoſe

of the mind, they ſhall not be wanting. With theſe pleaſures, which are of a mixed nature, partly corporeal, and partly intellectual, there ſhall be joined the abſence of all ſuch bodily impreſſions as might make the ſoul uneaſy, and leſs capable of injoying its true delights. Will the happineſs of the next life be heavenly? So much the better; heaven being, if I may ſo expreſs it, the Paradiſe of the creation, the place where all happy ſpirits finally aſſemble, and all good things are amaſſed and injoyed. Heavenly this bleſſedneſs will be, and therefore agreeable to the body which the ſaint ſhall have after the reſurrection, which will be heavenly. Such injoyments as we at preſent have, and the ſenſualiſt, and the worldling, place all their felicity in, would not at all ſuit with a glorified body. If I am among the ſons of the reſurrection, I ſhall be equal to the angels in reſpect of thoſe bodily appetites to which man is ſubject now, as free from any ſuch appetites and deſires as they are. And what then ſhould I do with ſuch things as I neither deſired, nor had capacities to injoy? Inſtead of theſe, I ſhall have a ſucceſſion of much nobler delights. The body itſelf will be inconceivably improved, and the pleaſures and entertainments of the body no leſs than the body itſelf. And thus, thoſe very things that are brought againſt this felicity, and urged as reaſons why I

ſhould not for the ſake of it give up preſent indulgences, and dedicate myſelf to a life of ſtrict virtue and piety, are really unanſwerable arguments for it; ſince the higheſt happineſs my nature is capable of, muſt have thoſe properties which are here objected againſt, and piety and virtue are the only preparation for ſuch a happineſs.

MEDITATION V.

On the pleaſures and advantages of a life of Faith.

WHAT a wretched belief is that of the *Atheiſt*, if there be any ſuch monſter! How wild, and ſolitary, and uncomfortable! Were the light of the ſun extinguiſhed in the natural world, it would not be followed with ſuch total darkneſs as that which would overwhelm the moral world, upon the ſuppoſition of no Deity, no all-wiſe Spirit to inlighten and inliven other intelligent Spirits, no ſuperintending mind to protect, aſſiſt and reward humble piety, and to check and puniſh lawleſs vice; in a word, to direct and govern the affairs of the univerſe. Where then would be the refuge of the upright ſoul? What ſecurity

could it have? What satisfaction in itself, or in any thing besides? When all was imagined to be the effect of blind *Chance* and *Necessity*, and abandoned to them. Nay, what positive advantage could *atheistical* notions afford to the vicious man himself; having a thousand restless desires which he could not stifle, and yet had no reasonable hope to see accomplished, must he not be miserable beyond remedy? And whereas there are those that disapprove of the *Atheist*'s scheme, or pretend to do it, who yet will not allow that God, infinitely good and holy as he is, hath done any thing extraordinary to recover his reasonable creatures out of their present degenerate state; that the Christian Religion, how well fitted soever to answer this end, was not designed for it; and though it hath been of admirable use in several respects to reform the notions and manners of mankind, is yet no better than an imposture. it is certain, that the belief of a God cannot yield these men half the support and pleasure it does, or may, those who are persuaded that God hath spoken to them by his Son, by whom he hath expressly promised life and immortality, and offers all the assistance that can be desired in order to obtain them. These act upon a persuasion of their having a nearer access to God, and a surer and greater interest in him.

But,

But, what though *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord*, living in the mean while, after much the same manner as others who have not this Faith? Not to ask myself, will my Faith save me? Let the enquiry only be, whether it will contribute to make me happier for the present? Rather more unhappy, because self-condemned. This is not living by Faith; for that must imply that I live as those momentous truths which are the objects of my Faith teach me to do. And, provided I thus live, my Faith will be an everlasting spring of pleasure and consolation; a pleasure of the noblest kind, flowing from the exercise of the most excellent faculties of the human soul about the most glorious objects; a pleasure ever at hand, like that God on whom the Christian's Faith principally terminates, who is not less intimately present with the mind than its own thoughts. And, as for those other objects of my Faith that are distant from me in place or time, I can easily bring them home to myself by contemplation. It is but the labour of a thought (and that sure is not much) and I can place myself in the midst of the most delightful scene. And can I envy the pleasures of the world to those who have the largest injoyment of them, pleasures that never enter deep into the mind,

and, beſides that, are to be had only by intervals, and ſhort ſnatches, ſoon cloying, and having very little reliſh but after a painful privation, when I have delights, within call, ſo much better and more conſtant, and that never die, but only, by an eaſy change, put on immortality, like thoſe ſaints that ſhall be alive at the coming of their Judge? While the pleaſures of the ſenſualiſt are generally much ſhorter-lived than himſelf, even as to the capacity of injoying them; and at furtheſt will all expire when he does, never to revive more.

The nature of Faith is ſuch, that, when the pleaſure ariſing from the actual exerciſes of it is leſs ſenſible through the avocation of the mind to other objects, a peace and tranquility, proceeding from the habitual influence of Faith, ſtill remains, as a perpetual inhabitant, infinitely more valuable than the ſinner's pleaſures, and to which he is ſuch an utter ſtranger that it never turns aſide, like a way-faring perſon, to tarry with him ſo much as for a night. Faith inlarges and actuates the human faculties, widens the Chriſtian's proſpects, eſtabliſhes his hopes, fortifies his reſolutions, refines his deſires, fills his heart with the moſt generous wiſhes and deſigns in regard of other men; extinguiſhes the angry, fretful, ſelfiſh paſſions, and plants and nouriſhes thoſe of the mild, the uſeful, and the good-

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natured kind; all this it does in proportion to its ſtrength and influence, and by this means goes further in the production of true happineſs, which is an internal thing, than the whole world, with its greateſt variety of injoyments, could do. The mind is hereby kept from fluctuating amidſt all the uncertainties of the preſent life.

Can I not ſay, my own heart bearing me witneſs, that when my Faith hath prevailed, I have not been ſo liable to be elated with vain hopes and joys, and depreſt with fears and ſorrows no leſs vain; that I have then been moſt contented with my preſent condition, and leaſt anxious about my future? And indeed how can it be otherwiſe, when I believe that in both I am under the ſame wiſe and gracious diſpoſal? To him that hath Faith by which to eſtimate them, the good and evil things of life, its proſperity and adverſity, are not the ſame as to other men. The pleaſure of every innocent injoyment is double; becauſe the love of God, the hope of much better things to come, and his own wiſe improvement of it, raiſe its value. And, for the ſame reaſon, he does not feel half the weight another man does, in any trouble and affliction; being inſtructed and inabled to behave better in the day of adverſity, and *knowing that thoſe light afflictions, which are but for*

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a moment, work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

But the greateſt advantage of Faith, and that in which its wonder-working power is moſt ſeen, is its being able to transform death itſelf from one of the moſt frightful and ſhocking objects into one of the moſt lovely and deſireable. Faith cloaths the ſkeleton, gives it life and beauty, and quite alters the errand that this meſſenger of the grave comes upon to us. I am not now afraid to die (or my fear is ſwallowed up in hope) becauſe I know, that though I die, yet ſhall I live again, and that, *when the earthly houſe of this tabernacle is diſſolved, I ſhall have a building of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

AN
ESSAY
TOWARDS A
DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
Soul's Immateriality.

Ἆρ' ἔστι μέλλει ἀιδιάνεσθαί τιν
Ἐν αὐτὸ δεῖ εἶναι. PLOTINUS.

1718.

THE

PREFACE.

THE *arguments produced in the following* Eſſay, *in behalf of the* ſoul's immateriality, *have all of them their foundation in its faculty of* thinking. *This faculty is univerſally acknowledged not to be eſſential to* matter, *and I have attempted to prove that it cannot, by any way poſſible, be afterwards ſuperinduced. But however not knowing the ſucceſs of theſe arguments, I would here mention one of another kind, which begins where the others conclude. And whereas the uſual method hath been from the* immateriality *of the* Soul *to argue its* immortality, *I ſhall at preſent ſerve myſelf of its* immortality *to ſhew that it is* immaterial: *for granting the nature of the ſubſtance was not to be known by its operations, and that the thinking principle within us might be diviſible, for any inconſiſtency that can be demonſtrated between the properties of* diviſibility *and* cogitation, *yet from hence we ought not, as the ſcepticks do, to infer that the* ſoul *is* mortal, *even abſtracting from Revelation. No; but on the contrary, we ſhould firſt of all impartially examine the ſeveral proofs of the* immortality *of the* ſoul,

ſoul, *drawn from the Perfections of God, as a Being infinitely wiſe, and juſt, and good; and from the nature of man as a reaſonable agent; and if theſe appear convincing, as I am perſuaded they muſt do to an unprejudiced mind; from the* immortality *of the* ſoul *thus eſtabliſhed, we ſhould advance to the belief of its* immateriality; *it not being likely that what is naturally mortal ſhould be immortalized by the mere pleaſure of God. The natures of things ſeem to be good indications of the exiſtence God deſigned them for; if* mortal, *that he deſigned them for a* mortal *duration; and conſequently, from the duration of things we may determine their natures, and becauſe of the* immortality *of the* ſoul's duration, *be confident that it is naturally* immortal, *and becauſe naturally* immortal, *that it cannot be a ſyſtem of* matter. *The* immortality *of the* body *after the reſurrection, which we Chriſtians believe on the teſtimony of the Goſpel, is no prejudice to this reaſoning, in regard the body is not the whole Being, nor immortalized for its own ſake, but as belonging to a compoſition, one part of which is* immortal *by the priviledge of its nature.*

The argument from the diviſibility *of* matter, *which I have chiefly inſiſted on, tho' an old one, as may appear from the* Motto *on the Title Page, hath yet of late years been managed to greater advantage than ever; particularly by the learned Dr.* Clarke

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in his admirable Letters, which for ſtrength of reaſoning, and fair controverſy, have not been often equaled. And what ſhall they do that come after ſuch a Writer? But either thankfully make uſe of his aſſiſtance, as I have done, or neglecting the lights which he would furniſh them with, run the hazard of commiting miſtakes, which they would not otherwiſe have been guilty of. From that Author, it is moſt probable, I took the form of the argument, which I have caſt into ſeveral Propoſitions; tho' I do not remember that I was aware of it at the time of drawing it up. If I have placed the argument in a more advantageous attitude for ſome underſtandings; if, by contracting it into a narrower compaſs, I have added to the ſtrength of it, without rendering it obſcure; if I have ſupplied any ſeeming defect, or made any other improvement in it, I ſhall not think myſelf to need an excuſe.

As to the reſt of the Eſſay, *let but the Reader allow what is here advanced, a fair and attentive conſideration, and I ſhall have nothing to complain of, even tho' the iſſue ſhould be, that he thinks it to carry much leſs evidence and weight with it, than it does in the opinion of the Writer.*

And here I ſhould have troubled my Reader with no further Preface, had not a book, with this formidable title, Clavis Univerſalis, or a Demonſtration of the Non-exiſtance

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and Impoſſibility of an External World, *given me occaſion to ſtate the evidence we have for the exiſtence of bodies, againſt this and other ſuch metaphyſical refiners, as in the following* Eſſay, *I have aimed to prove the exiſtence of* ſpiritual ſubſtances *againſt the* materialiſts. *The firſt reflection I made on reading this facetious Author, was concerning the extravagance of the human Intellect, which like a fiery unbroken horſe, will not be confined within the paths preſcrib'd it, but ſtarts out into unaccountable abſurdities.*

Truth, *as well as* Virtue, *hath its extremes, and it is not more natural for the* will *to run into exceſſes in* action, *than for the* underſtanding *to commit the ſame error in* thinking. *Some have taught, there is nothing but* matter *in the univerſe; others, that there is nothing but* mind *or* ſpirit; *will not a third ſort riſe up, and aſſert that neither one nor the other,* i. e. *that nothing at all exiſts?*

Yea, I myſelf will undertake to prove this by the ſame way of reaſoning which this Author makes uſe of to demonſtrate the impoſſibility of an external world. *From the difficulties that preſs each ſide of the queſtion, concerning the* diviſibility of matter in infinitum, *he draws this inference, that there can be no ſuch thing as* matter; *the ſubject of the queſtion, which, if it exiſted, muſt either be diviſible or not diviſible,* in infinitum. *In*

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like manner ſay I, it is to our conceptions impoſſible that any thing ſhould have exiſted from eternity, *all duration being ſucceſſive, and made up of moments, every one of which was once preſent and therefore had a beginning; and if every moment, then the whole duration muſt have had the ſame: and yet, on the other hand, it is manifeſtly impoſſible that any thing ſhould ariſe out of* nothing, *without ſome pre-exiſtent cauſe to produce it. Now theſe premiſes being admitted, can there be a more unavoidable concluſion than that* nothing *does, ever did, or can exiſt?*

What I have to ſay to this Author ſhall be camprized in a few pages; for I reckon that it would be as needleſs to return a particular anſwer to every paragraph of his Book, as to give one's ſelf the trouble of cutting off every toe or finger from a monſter, whom we could diſpatch with one ſolid knock on the head.

If it will oblige the Author, I yield him what he contends for in the firſt part, that the world, *which is the immediate object of perception, is not* external. *I have pleaded for the ſame thing in a* Diſcourſe *which only waits till the favourable reception of this ſhall encourage it to appear abroad. Where I endeavour to ſhew, that our knowledge of the* world, *which we call viſible, is by* idea, *not by* intuition. *And that I ſhould make choice of the ſame argument to prove this which Mr.* Collier *hath done, diſpoſes me the rather to*

believe that we are both in the right; and were led to this thought, not by chance, but by the clear evidence that accompanies it.

But what great advantage Mr. Collier *can have from this conceſſion, to demonſtrate the impoſſibility or non-exiſtence of an* external world, *I do not ſee.*

Againſt his attempt to demonſtrate that ſuch a world *is an utter impoſſibility, I offer this* one *argument, which I am contented to have ventured in the liſt againſt his* nine—*That our having an idea of* matter (*which is what the Author means by an* external world) *proves* matter *to be poſſible; foraſmuch as an abſolute impoſſibility can never become the object of conception. Every poſſibility hath ſome kind of exiſtence in the power that is able to produce it into being; and for that reaſon, may have an ideal exiſtence, when it doth not exiſt really. But an abſolute impoſſibility being a mere* nothing, *it is every whit as impoſſible to frame an idea of any ſuch impoſſibility, as it is to conceive of a ſquare circle, or of the number* three *made up of twice two. Of things equally immpoſſible, it is equally repugnant to form any idea; and therefore if* matter *were an utter impoſſibility, or a pure* nothing, *the impoſſibility of having an idea of it muſt be the ſame, as in the caſe of a ſquare circle,* &c. *Every idea is ſomething, but ſomething can never be fit to repre-*

repreſent mere nothing. *How then come we to have an idea of* matter, *or an* external world? *The leaſt we can infer from this idea is, that* matter *is not impoſſible.*

And if matter *be poſſible, what ſhould make us doubt of its actual exiſtence? It may be ſaid, becauſe no ſuch thing is viſible; for we ſee nothing but our own ideas; and to what purpoſe ſhould we go about to ſuppoſe an* external world *that is inviſible?*

My anſwer is — That if the world *ſerves all the ſame ends both of* contemplation *and* action, *tho' knowable only by idea, as it would if it were viſible, or the immediate object of perception, then its inviſibility can be no reaſon againſt its exiſtence. Now that it doth anſwer all the ſame ends, I thus prove. And,* firſt, *as to* contemplation. *That which would exerciſe our* contemplation *in the frame of a* world *that was viſible, muſt be the vaſt extent of the whole; and the beautiful order, great variety, and wiſe ſubſerviency of the parts; from all which we ſhould be led to admire the infinite power, wiſdom and goodneſs of the ſupreme cauſe. And are not theſe perfections equally diſplayed? And is there not the ſame reaſon to adore them, in the formation of this* world, *if in the main correſpondent to our idea of it, as if it were immediately ſeen? I can diſcern no difference. I will try if this may not be illuſtrated. A piece of ſculpture*

admirably wrought is put out to view; but, to preſerve it againſt the injuries of the weather, or for ſome other reaſon, is varniſhed over. Every body extols the artiſt, and is pleaſed with his work; and yet no one ſees that which was the immediate ſubject of his art, being hid under the varniſh. Our ideas are this thin varniſh ſpread over the face of nature, which do not hinder us from paſſing a judgment of it; becauſe they expreſs outward objects, much as the varniſh takes the form of the work upon which it is laid. And then, ſecondly, *as for* action. *If my idea of an object, which I would approach or avoid, repreſent it in the place where it is, why is not this every jot as well as if I had notice of it by immediate perception? So far then we have cleared our way, that an* external world *may poſſibly exiſt; and that no good reaſon can be drawn from it* inviſibility, *that it doth not actually exiſt.*

I now proceed to demonſtrate its exiſtence after this manner—I have certain ideas which I call ſimple; *ſuch are the ideas of* ſolidity, extenſion, &c. *I find it impoſſible to get rid of theſe ideas, or to add to their number. I find likewiſe a variety of* complexed *ideas that were introduced into my mind without my willing it, tho' at the time many of theſe did firſt appear there, I had the free and entire exerciſe of that faculty; ſuch are the ideas*

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of a dog, *a* horſe, &c. *which ideas I cannot forbear having actually preſent to my view at certain times, (I mean, when I ſee, or fancy that I ſee ſuch and ſuch objects before me.) My ſenſations too are independant of my* will; *I cannot encreaſe their number, or repeat thoſe I have experienced when I pleaſe. All which forces me upon this concluſion, That the cauſe of theſe ideas and ſenſations is* external. *But that there is a* world *of Beings without me agreeing to my ideas, and which have powers that are at leaſt the occaſional cauſes of my ſenſations, doth not from hence immediately appear; for why may not God, (whoſe exiſtence I learn from that of my own ſoul) by his almighty power raiſe theſe ideas and ſenſations in me, no objects exiſting that are the exemplary cauſes of my ideas, or the occaſional cauſes of my ſenſations? The thing is not abſolutely impoſſible. But that it is in fact impoſſible, becauſe not reconcileable with undoubted principles of truth, I think may be eaſily proved.*

The repreſentativeneſs of ideas, which unavoidably leads men to conceive of things as exiſting without them; the livelineſs, the order, the conſtancy, and the uniformity which plainly diſtinguiſh their waking ideas from thoſe they have in ſleep; the concurrent teſtimony of the other ſenſes with that of ſight, which is ſuch that when the ſight gives a perſon intelligence

of an object, either his feeling, or ſmelling or taſting, or hearing, one, or more, of all theſe do many times bear witneſs to the ſame thing. All theſe, with obſervations of a like nature, have wrought in all mankind a fixed perſuaſion of an external world; *which hath always paſt for very reaſonable, and will ſtill do ſo, after all the endeavours of one or two merry Gentlemen with their fellow-creatures to make them renounce their ſenſes. So that he who aſſerts the non-exiſtance of an* external world, *that is to ſay, that God hath furniſhed men with as good evidence for the exiſtence of things that are not in nature as they could derive from objects realy exiſting, doth not conſider as he ought the greatneſs, veracity and wiſdom of the Supreme Being. It is infinitely beneath his Divine Majeſty, and the gravity of his Providence, to amuſe and delude poor mortals with mock ſhews, and empty idle viſions; and to annex real pleaſures and pains to merely fanciful impreſſions. Neither is it more reconcilcable with the divine ſincerity for God to aſſure me by ſeveral conſpiring proofs that there are outward objects, that my ſenſes are exerciſed about them, and the reports they give of them are to be credited; and all this with intent to make me believe it, when the whole is no better than trick and deluſion. And I fear it would be found as inconſiſtent with the wiſdom of God, to make it a natural duty to adore that and other attri-*

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butes in the ſtructure of a world *that was never created. He would not ſurely be beholden to a deception for the glory of his wiſdom, power and goodneſs, and refer us for a proof of theſe perfections to creatures that are only imaginary.*

And that which ſtrengthens this reaſoning, is, that God hath not left us any way, obvious to mankind, of knowing the non-exiſtence of an external world, *which he might and therefore would have done, if ſuch a* world *did not exiſt: for notwithſtanding Mr.* Collier *is pleaſed to ſay,* " *that whatever is* viſible *muſt* " *as ſuch appear* external, *and that therefore* " *there is a neceſſity that our ideas ſhould ſeem* " *to be without us;*" *I muſt deſire ſome other proof beſides his bare affirmation. What will he ſay of the mundane idea in the Divine Mind? That it appears* external? *It would appear then to be otherwiſe than it is; which nothing can be ſuppoſed to do with regard to an underſtanding every way perfect. It is therefore no contradiction for a thing to be viſible that doth not appear diſtant: and if ſo, would not the wiſe Author of our nature, in caſe there were no* external world *anſwering to our idea of it, have ſo contrived our ideas, that they ſhould appear to be at home in the mind, thereby to prevent the miſtake we otherwiſe run into of things exiſting without us? Nay to me this ſeems the moſt natural ſtate of our ideas. I will endeavour to explain my-*

ſelf. Suppoſe then a hollow globe endued with perception, and painted on the inſide with birds, beaſts and fiſhes, and to have the knowledge of all that is delineated within it; the whole delineation being within the globe, and the perception the globe hath of it but one act, is it not certain that the appearance which this repreſentation would moſt naturally make to the globe muſt be of ſomething comprehended within itſelf? And the ſame it would probably be with the mind, if there were not ſome external world, *to ſignify and repreſent which our ideas, by the rules of divine perſpective, appear* external. *But granting it to be an inſeparable property of every thing that is* viſible *to appear* external, *yet on ſuppoſition there were no* external world, *who can doubt but that by ſome eaſy and ſtanding law of our nature God could, and therefore would, have ſignified to us, that our ideas, notwithſtanding the ſhow they make of being* external, *were not ſo, nor intended to denote things* external, *by bearing their reſemblance?*

Againſt all that hath been ſaid, I know but of one objection that deſerves an anſwer, and that is this. The ſuppoſition of the non-exiſtence of an external world *doth not at all derogate from the ſincerity, or any other attribute, of God, becauſe even upon this ſuppoſition nothing appears to exiſt that doth not exiſt; for all that appears to exiſt is only what we ſee, but we ſee nothing but our ideas: ſo that*

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if there be any thing in this case repugnant to any perfection of God, it is that ideas should have the appearance of external, *which are not; which Mr.* Collier *will be ready to think bears as hard upon me as upon him. I answer—*

First. *By denying that nothing appears to us to exist besides our ideas, or the images of things transmitted by the sight. He that affirms this (as the Author doth in effect) is either out of his senses, or forgets that he hath more senses than one; for do not* solidity, extention *and* figure, *appear to the touch to exist?*

Secondly. *An* external world *appears even from our* sight *to exist. I do not say that it appears thus to our* sight. *Tho' the* external world *be not visible, yet the argument from our* sight *for the being of such a* world *is so manifest, that if there be no such* world *we are deceived and imposed upon. I beg this Gentleman for once to suppose with me, that there are solid extended substances; and to suppose further, that a spirit assuming a vehicle of air, appears in the form of a human body, would not the Author think mankind to be in the right who consent to call such an apparition a* desceptio visus? *Tho' in this case there is nothing appears to the sight to exist that doth not exist; for we see the outward shape and superficies of a man, and that is all we can see in bodies the most close and compact. The flesh, and blood and bones are never visible, being*

being concealed under the outward ſurface; but becauſe the outward appearance of a man uſes to be accompanied with theſe, when it is not, we ſay, properly enough, that our ſight hath deceived us. In like manner, tho' the external world *be never ſeen by us, yet our ideas having the appearance of ſomething* external, *ſignify the exiſtence of ſuch a* world, *eſpecially concurring ſo exactly with our ſenſations.*

Thirdly. *Upon the received belief of an* external world, *there is not the leaſt difficulty to reconcile the ſeeming externeity of our ideas with truth. For the deſign of our ideas being to repreſent not only the exiſtence of things, but the manner of their exiſtence, it is abſolutely neceſſary that to repreſent things external and diſtant, our ideas ſhould ſeem to be external and diſtant. A* world *there is really exiſting, with all that wonderful beauty which we ſuppoſe to be in it, altho' what is generally believed to be that* world *is not ſo, but a mere repreſentation in our own minds: which only demonſtrates the perfection of the divine ſkill in painting ſo much to the life, that we miſtake a picture for the original ſubſtance. But if there be no* external world, *the ſeeming externeity of our ideas will be altogether unaccountable.*

AN

AN

ESSAY

TOWARDS A

DEMONSTRATION

OF THE

Soul's Immateriality.

SECT. I.

THE ſoul is that in every man which reaſons, deliberates, reſolves, feels pleaſure, or pain, *&c.* all which when we would expreſs by a ſingle term, we make uſe of the word *thought*.

Thought is an operation that involves in it a conſciouſneſs of itſelf. So that when a perſon is ſaid *to think*, the meaning is, he perceives, or is conſcious of ſomething that paſſes within him.

This perceptive conſcious principle I affirm, and ſhall endeavour to prove, is *immaterial*; by *immaterial* intending neither more nor leſs than that it is not a diviſible, and ſolid ſubſtance, which is our notion of *matter*.

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The *medium* by which I ſhall attempt the proof of this, is, in general, *conſciouſneſs* or *thought*. Proceeding by this plain method,

I. I ſhall remove the chief prejudices which lie againſt the belief of the ſoul's immateriality,

II. Produce the argument from which I think I have a right to conclude, the ſoul is immaterial.

I. The chief prejudices againſt the belief of the ſoul's immateriality, are theſe. A pretended contradiction in the idea of an immaterial ſubſtance—the unconceivableneſs of an union between ſoul and body, on ſuppoſition of the ſoul's being immaterial—the mutual dependance of ſoul and body in their operations—and laſtly, the appearances of ſenſe and reaſon in brutes. Now if concerning each of theſe I plainly ſhew, that it is a prejudice, and no more, I ſhall have the advantage to obtain a fairer and more impartial examination of the proofs which follow.

1. To begin with the pretended contradiction that is found in the idea of an immaterial ſubſtance: how doth that appear? Why, in affirming of the ſame thing, that it *is*, and *is not*; for *ſubſtance* and *matter*, you muſt know, are terms of equal latitude and meaning; wherefore, if the ſoul be immaterial ſubſtance, it is immaterial matter,

i. e.

i. e. is, and is not, *matter*. But they are deceived who think to pass this upon us for proof; for I demand again what assurance they can give us that *matter* and *substance* are equivalent terms, so that whatever is not *matter* ceases to be any thing? It will be said, or in effect what they say amounts to this, that they are not able to conceive of any thing besides *matter*: so saith *Velleius* the *Epicurean* in *Cicero*, *Aperta simplexque mens, nulla re adjuncta, quæ sentire possit, fugere intelligentiæ nostræ vim & notionem videtur.** But what dare we conclude from hence? That it is impossible for any thing else to exist? Nothing less. A man born blind can form no idea of the objects peculiar to sight, and yet they who have the use of their eyes will not be very forward to grant, that his ignorance proves it a contradiction there should be more senses than four; or indeed that it proves any thing but it self.

You are not able to conceive of any substance but *matter*. And have you a conception of material substance? By all means produce it, if you have. For my part, I always thought the utmost we could say of *matter* went no further than this, that it is somewhat endowed with *extention* and *solidity*; but of this somewhat itself, I was so ignorant as to imagine we had no idea, and must confess am

* Cicer. de Natura. Deor. l. 1. ad Init.

am no wiſer ſtill. And if others lie under the ſame ignorance, they will acknowledge that we may have as clear a notion of immaterial ſubſtance, as of material. We have the ſame certainty that ſomething exiſts *thinking*, as we have of any thing extended, and tho' we have no idea of the thing which *thinks*, let it not therefore be concluded that this *thinking* thing is *matter*, unleſs from our not being able to conceive of that ſomething which is extended, we will infer that it is nothing at all. For, in ſhort, our ignorance proves there is no ſubſtance at all, or is no proof but there may be immaterial ſubſtances, as well as material.

Yet further, let it be explained what they mean by not being able to conceive of immaterial ſubſtance. Is it not that they cannot form an *imaginative* idea of it? That it eſcapes their fancy? And will not be repreſented under a ſenſible appearance? This every one knows to be their meaning; and it amounts to this moſt profound reaſoning — I will not believe there is ſuch a thing as immaterial ſubſtance, becauſe I cannot imagine it, or frame ſuch an idea of it as would evince it to be material; for could I make to myſelf an image of the ſoul (which is what theſe men endeavour to do even as it is immaterial, and which till they can perform they will not be perſuaded of its immateriality) the ſoul would *ipſo facto* be

be ſuppoſed to be material. Juſt as if a blind man ſhould argue there could not be a ſenſe more than he had, becauſe the objects of any ſuch fifth ſenſe did not come under the notice of either of his four; not conſidering, that if they did, ſight would not be a diſtinct ſenſe. And is it not a little hard that men will not be ſatisfied, unleſs a thing be proved to exiſt by a *medium*, which would directly prove it not to exiſt?

But I have not yet done; the denial of the poſſibility of immaterial ſubſtances hath its foundation in a prejudice, which if we allow of, we muſt not only believe there is no incorporeal ſubſtance, but even in contradiction to our own experience, that there is no *thinking* ſubſtance. The reaſon is, that cogitation, whereſoever we place it, is not a whit more level to the apprehenſion than immateriality. I am indubitably conſcious of my *thinking*; but if I examine what it is I do when I *think*, if I endeavour to graſp at my *thought*, and would have a diſtinct knowledge of it, I am loſt, I am confounded, I give over the enquiry, in deſpair of finding out how my ſoul *thinks*, as much as I am of comprehending how it can be immaterial.

I have been the longer upon this, becauſe it is probable, the fancying a contradiction in the idea of an incorporeal Being lies at the bottom of moſt mens prejudices againſt the im-

immateriality of the human ſoul; theirs, I mean, who will not allow it poſſible for the ſoul to be immaterial, as generally, I believe they do not, who hold it to be material. They conclude it impoſſible the ſoul ſhould be immaterial (by conſequence? or becauſe there are ſome things obſerveable concerning it which cannot agree to an immaterial Being? No; but) becauſe they think it impoſſible there ſhould be any immaterial ſubſtance at all; the notion involving a contradiction. Accordingly it is remarkable of moſt of the materialiſts, both antient and modern, that they have not been contented with aſſerting only the materiality of the ſoul, but have, (thoſe of them who pretended to believe the exiſtence of a Deity,) taught the Deity Himſelf to be likewiſe a corporeal Being: and from the belief of *a material God* to the belief of none at all, the tranſition is eaſy; as I make no doubt but atheiſm hath frequently proceeded by ſuch ſteps. The uſe I make of this particular is, that ſeeing it is not impoſſible there ſhould exiſt immaterial ſubſtances, it looks exceeding probable, even at firſt glance, that *cogitative, ſelf-active* Beings are ſuch; in regard *cogitation* and *ſelf-motion* are the moſt diſtant things that can be from all the known properties of *matter*.

11. Is not the union of ſoul and body abſolutely unconceivable, on ſuppoſition of the ſoul's being immaterial? All union is per-

performed by *contact*; but what *contact* can there be between body and ſpirit, a ſolid and unſolid ſubſtance? The one is too ſubtle for the other to faſten on. This is the objection; the anſwer follows.

In the union of *matter* with *matter*, two things muſt concur, *juxtapoſition*, and *coheſion*. As to the former, *ſpirit* and *matter* have this advantage for union above *matter* and *matter*, that whereas the parts of *matter* can only exiſt in contiguous ſpaces, or ſpaces bounding one on the other, *ſpirit* and *matter* may exiſt in the very ſame ſpace. For the other, if the coalition of two ſuch diſſimilar ſubſtances as ſoul and body be thought inexplicable, the coheſion of the parts of *matter* is not leſs ſo. The invention of hooked particles, or of a certain glutinous ſubſtance, only puts the difficulty one remove further off, for ſtill the queſtion returns, how the parts of theſe hooks, or of this glue, (for parts they have) hang together? Which queſtion it is not poſſible we ſhould ſolve without having recourſe to ſome foreign preſſure, either of the ſurrounding *matter*, or ſome inviſible agent. And by a like method I will undertake to account for the union of ſoul and body. As thus; *gravitation* being ſomething extrinſick to the notion of *matter*, ſo as to flow from the meer *will* of the Creator, not any innate force of its own, there is no abſurdity in ſuppoſing there

may be something analogous to it between a *spirit* and a certain portion of *matter* prepared and fitted up for its reception. Why hath God impressed an attractive or gravitating force on bodies, but in order to keep the parts of the universe together? And for the same reason, when he designs the union of a soul and body, he may for the effecting it, give them a mutual attraction, which however shall not take place till they are come together; and then the consequence of it will be their adherence to one another in the closest manner imaginable. The loadstone and the iron when they touch are not easily separated; and yet they touch only in their surfaces; how powerfully then must this attraction operate between two substances co-existing in the same space? Doubtless the attraction must be very strong; but being arbitrary, may be suspended, upon what conditions God sees fit, particularly a fitness in the body to discharge the necessary functions of life, which condition failing, the attraction ceases, and the union is dissolved. This, I confess, is but an hypothesis, but it is an hypothesis as likely to be true as any yet found out to account for the cohesion of *matter*.

III. There is a mutual dependance of soul and body in their operations upon each other. The soul receives ideas by the body, and the body is animated by the soul, and directed in the motion of the several members at its pleasure. The soul arrives

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to the maturity of its faculties by the ſame degrees the body comes to its ſtrength and ſtature, and moſt times decays gradually with that; the infirmities of infancy and old age being common to both. If one is affected, the other doth not remain inſenſible; they rejoyce and grieve, are ſerene, and cloudy together. The body being in good temper, the mind feels itſelf vigorous and fitted for contemplation; but as the ſpirits of the one flag, the other becomes tired of thinking.

In reply to this, I might take notice that in many of its operations, the ſoul acts plainly ſeparate from the body, and without borrowing any immediate aſſiſtance from it, as in its abſtractions, in the contemplations of ſpiritual objects, and in general, in all its reaſonings and deductions: for tho' it cannot be denied that a certain diſpoſition of the brain is by a law of the Creator made neceſſary to the regular operations of the mind, yet hath not the brain directly any manner of ſhare in them. A man during ſleep is not ordinarily capable of coherent thinking; a ſound happens to rouſe him, and then he thinks juſtly and pertinently; his waking thoughts are purely his own, and in no proper ſenſe cauſed by the ſound that wak'd him, tho' had he not been wak'd, he had had no ſuch thoughts. And then as for corporeal images, in the conveyance of which the body may ſeem of right to

claim a greater intereſt, in reality it is only the condition of them. Stop either of the ſenſes, and the objects of that ſenſe are not to be perceived by the mind; and ſo, if you place a veil between the eye and any object, the object is no longer diſcernable; remove that let, and it is preſently ſeen; and yet whether there be or be not a wall of partition between the object and the eye, the eye is ſtill the ſame, and endued with the ſame power of ſeeing. That the clearneſs and vivacity of our ſenſible ideas depends on the perfection of the organs of ſenſe is not more wonderful, than that objects appear more diſtinct or obſcure according to the medium thro' which the images of them paſs.

Poſſibly it will be here enquired, what advantage or hindrance body can be to ſpirit in its correſpondence with the corporeal world? To which I anſwer, that it ſeems moſt natural to think that *matter* cannot by any proper intrinſick efficacy of its own, either help or prejudice a ſpirit's view of outward objects. It is indeed difficult to divine by what way immaterial beings hold intelligence with material, and come acquainted with their properties and opperations. But this, to ſay the leaſt, is not harder to conceive than how, ſuppoſing the ſoul to be material, ſurrounding objects ſhould produce in us the ideas and ſenſations they do;

do; for by the way, what relation have the ſenſation of heat, and the motions that occaſion it? The connection between certain motions and certain ideas and ſenſations muſt be arbitrary, of whatever ſubſtance we imagine the ſoul to be; and therefore certainly, it were unjuſt to accuſe us of making abſurd ſuppoſitions, if we ſay the ſoul is *immaterial*, and God of his own good pleaſure hath appointed the bodily ſenſes to be the occaſional cauſes of its ideas.

I might further obſerve of this objection, that if it concludes any thing, it concludes abundantly too much, tho' I verily believe not more than they who make it would be glad to have it prove. If the ſoul muſt therefore be *material* becauſe its operations are affected by the body, for the ſame reaſon *thinking* muſt be a *material action*; for tho' the ſoul be *matter*, yet if it *think* by virtue of a power planted in it ſupernaturally by God, and altogether different from its other powers and qualities, the difficulty of conceiving how *thought* ſhould be any way influenced by the temper of the body is much the ſame as upon the hypotheſis of the *ſoul*'s *immateriality*. So that, as was ſaid, *thought* muſt be a material property, if this argument for the *materiality* of the ſoul holds good. But that *thinking* is not a material quality will be demonſtrated in its place.

The command the ſoul hath over the body, hath not yet been conſidered, nor will I now pretend to explain it; not that I apprehend the difficulty to ariſe from the *immateriality* of the ſoul; I am equally at a loſs, if I go upon the ſuppoſition of its being *material*; *e. g.* a labourer *wills* the motion of his hands, and this order of his *will* is obeyed without the leaſt delay or reluctance. Whence is this inſtantaneous motion? Is it communicated by impulſe from the ſoul? That is perfectly incomprehenſible, becauſe the motion begins not in the hand, but in the brain, and from thence is propagated to the extreme members. Now of the parts immediately agitated, the ſoul having no idea, nor any thought of their motion, what makes them move? Of the ſeveral fibres which it holds as it were by the ends, not knowing which are neceſſary to the motion deſigned, or that any of them are ſo, how comes it to make uſe of the right, without deſign, and without ever miſtaking? Explain this to me, and then triumph if I cannot tell the manner of comunicating motion from an immaterial ſubſtance. But tho' this difficulty were got over, there is ſtill ſomething behind which requires a ſolution, *viz.* from whence the *motion* of the ſoul itſelf takes its riſe. The ſoul impels the body, but what impels the ſoul? A volition, a thought;

thought; and if a meer *thought* gives beginning or direction to the motion of a material ſoul, where's the abſurdity that the ſame *thought* in an immaterial ſubſtance moves the members of the body? The truth is, God ſeems to have inveſted our ſouls with this deſpotick empire to facilitate the belief of his actuating the univerſe, and that we might not want a faint ſhadow and reſemblance of the manner of his doing it. I cannot, ſure, imagine the univerſe is ſo unwieldy but Omnipotence may turn and manage it, when, weak and dependent as I am, the ſole act of my *will* ſuffices to put that in motion which before was at reſt.

IV. Brutes appear to have ſenſe and reaſon, which in them, however, can proceed from none but a material principle. But,

1. Who informed us that brutes have ſenſe and reaſon? We are conſcious of no ſuch thing in them, as we are in ourſelves, and therefore cannot fairly demand (which yet ſome will do with an air of inſult) that if brutes, notwithſtanding all the proofs they give of their ſenſibility, may be as blockiſh and ſtupid as unanimated *matter*, what infallible aſſurance can we have, that we ourſelves do think and reaſon, feel pleaſure or pain? Yes, every man's conſciouſneſs that he thinks, is a proof of it that can never deceive him. And do not other creatures give us plain indications of Reaſon?

I grant it; but not a Reaſon of their own. To go no further than thoſe common inſtances of the admirable architecture of a bird's neſt, and the uniformity obſerved by birds of the ſame kind in the model they work after, theſe are ſuch diſcoveries of a Reaſon ſomewhere, as at the ſame time evidently demonſtrate, it belongs not to them; in them it is only a blind inſtinct (as might be ſhewn by other conſiderations were it needful) tho' in regard of Providence, it is infinite wiſdom guiding them to their reſpective ends. And why ſhould not the ſame account ſatisfy concerning all their actions? I would not willingly be miſtaken here, and with the followers of *Deſcartes* thought to reſolve all the motions of bruit creatures into meer *mechaniſm*. To me it ſeems no leſs than impoſſible that the faint and inconſiderable impreſſions of the maſter's voice, for inſtance, upon his dog, can have ſuch a force as to produce the wonderful effects we ſee often to follow. I ſhould therefore rather chuſe to trace up all this to a general *will* of God, at once comprehending all particular objects. It is acknowledged that God always foreſaw all the poſſible alterations and rencounters that might ever happen to the bodies of animals, and this by one glance of his *underſtanding*; and why by one act of his *will* may we not believe, he hath eſtabliſhed a connection and harmony

harmony between the impreſſions made on the body of an animal, and the motions moſt for the preſervation of the animal machine? In purſuance of which decree, an impreſſion being made, the correſpondent motion enſues, not by virtue of the laws of motion, but the energy of a divine and arbitrary decree. And I am the more inclined to ſolve the *Phænomena* in the brute creation this way, becauſe of our not being able, unleſs by this hypotheſis, to give any manner of account of many things tranſacted in human nature; the things I mean, are ideas and ſenſations fetched from without, to the production of which the operations of external objects on the ſenſe are no more than improper and occaſional cauſes. The true ſpring and original of them is the ordination of God; and to ſay the leaſt, it is not in itſelf more unlikely that certain impulſes in, and upon, the body of a brute, ſhould, by the order of God, give riſe to the motions conſequent upon them, than that the ſame happening to the body of a man ſhould by the efficacy of the ſame will occaſion various ſenſations and ideas of the mind.

2. If it be granted that brutes perceive and reaſon, where is the harm if we add further that their ſouls are *immaterial?* O, by no means; for then they muſt he *immortal* too; and *immortality* is what theſe men

men do not care to hear of. But how does that follow? They will, it is true, be naturally *immortal*; notwithstanding which God can annihilate them; neither will their annihilation draw after it that of human souls, which cannot fully answer the end of their creation in this world, as those of brutes, for any thing we can say, may do. But let it be unbecoming the wisdom of the Creator to annihilate *spirit*, when dull insensible *matter* remains still in being; may not the souls of brutes live after the death of their body? We know not what ends divine Providence may have to serve by them in an after state, what revolutions they may pass thro', and the several conditions that may be allotted them agreeable to their nature. And if there were room for guesses, I would make this one, that the souls of brutes have faculties capable of rational and moral operations, tho' at present not able to exert them (which is confessedly the case of ideots) but being subjected to the dominion of man, and to serve his uses and occasions in the present state, are purposely laid under a temporary incapacity thro' a defect in the organs of the bodies to which they are united; and consequently when they shall have accomplished the ends of the Creator in this inferior station, they may be removed where they shall act more suitably to the dignity of their nature, and more for their own happiness. Even this

is

is far leſs improbable than that the vaſt capacities, the uſeful faculties, and divine operations of a reaſonable ſoul have their abode in a ſyſtem of *matter*, and enjoy none but ſuch poor precarious exiſtence as that can afford them.

SECT. II.

Theſe prejudices removed, I ſhall now, in the Second Place, produce the arguments on which I ground my aſſertion of the *ſoul's immateriality*. And as I ſaid at firſt, the general medium I ſhall make uſe of, is *conſciouſneſs* or *thought*. *Matter* cannot *think*; and if ſo, unqueſtionably *the ſoul is immaterial*. To make good this propoſition, I ſhall advance by the following ſteps. *Thinking* is not eſſential to *matter*—is not a mode of any other property belonging to *matter*, whether known or unknown—nor a property ſuperinduced by almighty power.

1. *Thinking* is not an eſſential property of *matter*. And in truth, it is well it is not; for a good natured man that believed all things above and under, and round about him full of *life* and *perception*, if he judged of them by himſelf, would be always in pain whatever poſture he was in, whether ſtanding, ſitting or lying, for that great number of poor diſtreſſed particles which he would be afraid of incommoding either way. Unleſs you had rather

rather ſuppoſe him happily made aquainted with Mr. *Hobb*'s diſtinction, and from him to have learnt to ſay, "*that tho' all matter doth* "*think, yet it is not conſcious of it*;" which if not in his meaning, in the terms, I am ſure, implies ſomething very much like a contradiction.

But to be more ſerious; (tho' indeed the matter little deſerves it) they who think it plainly demonſtrable that *matter* is infinitely diviſible, and any portion after it hath been dividing, if you will, millions of years, can never be reſolved into parts abſolutely ſimple and uncompounded, even tho' Omnipotence itſelf ſhould attempt the reducing it to ſuch a ſtate, will grant that it unexceptionably follows from the reaſon I ſhall afterwards give, why *thinking* can never exiſt in a diviſible Being, if this reaſon be good, that it cannot, either in the *act* or *power*, be eſſential to *matter*. But tho' there ſhould be atoms or indiſcerpible points of *matter*, yet *actual thinking* cannot be eſſential to *matter* for this reaſon, that if eſſential to any, it muſt be equally neceſſary to all, and ſo there will be as many diſtinct percipient Beings as there are atoms to make up this vaſt bulky univerſe; a ſuppoſition which all our thoughts recoil at: for, at this rate, a man is not one intelligent Being, but a multitude, a commonwealth, a world, of them. Upon which

which I aſk, how it happens there is but one and the ſame ſenſation for the whole body? Touch whatever part you pleaſe, we are invincibly conſcious, it is one and the ſame ſelf feels the impreſſion. Sometimes indeed I perceive one part of my body affected, ſomtimes another; but ſtill it is I that perceive it, that vital conſcious principle which thinks what I now write. Should it be ſuggeſted, that the ſameneſs of the ſenſation may be accounted for by ſuppoſing that all the thinking particles in one perſon club all their perceptions into one general conſciouſneſs, I ſhall have occaſion to lay open the folly of any ſuch ſuppoſition before I come to the end of this Diſcourſe.

And as the *act*, ſo the *power* of *thinking*, cannot be eſſential to *matter*. By *power*, I underſtand an immediate capacity of *thinking*, which, objects preſented, and all impediments removed, without any further alteration in the Being that poſſeſſes it, will exert itſelf, or at leaſt may be brought into *actual cogitation*. Now if ſuch a *power* be eſſential to *matter*, every particle of *matter* muſt be *actually cogitative*. For what ſhould hinder it? Not its fellow particles, for the utmoſt one atom can operate on another, is only to knock againſt it, and thereby put it in motion or reduce it to reſt. But what hath either motion or reſt to do with *thinking*? *Thinking* is as widely diſtant from local motion

tion as colour is from ſound. An atom is ſuch an obſtinate inflexible thing that after all the hammering in the world it muſt remain immutably the ſame; and therefore to ſuch a particle motion and reſt muſt be equivalent for any change they can make in its other qualities. And, for intereſting the power of God, ſome men will be cautious how they allow him any ſhare in the management of the world, for fear he ſhould interpoſe where they would not have him. But after all, I need not be ſollicitous about proving *thinking* not eſſential to *matter*, when none among the ſcepticks of the preſent age are hardy enough to ſtand by ſuch an aſſertion.

11. *Thinking* is not a mode of any property belonging to *matter*, whether known or unknown. This parcel of *matter* cannot enjoy the privilege of *thinking*, while its neighbour remains in its original ſtate of inſenſibility, by having one or more of its old properties diverſified. As for inſtance, by the modyfying its extenſion into any imaginable figure or texture of the parts even thoſe that are moſt minute, or by a difference in motion, as to kind or degree. My reaſon is, that after figure and motion have run thro' all the variety they are capable of, they are figure and motion ſtill. Conſequently, if *thought* were no more than a new appearance of theſe or any other properties

perties of *matter*, it would be impoſſible to reflect on a *thought* without framing an idea of the material property or properties of which it was a ſimple or a mixed mode; as we are not able to conceive of this or that figure, and yet have no idea of extenſion; or of this or that ſort or degree of motion, and at the ſame time be without any idea of motion; or of a mixture of the modes of ſeveral qualities, and have no knowledge of the qualities ſo compounded and mixed. The ſpecies of neceſſity involving the idea of the genus. But now let any one tell me, whether he be conſcious that his *thoughts* are thus allied to any property of *matter*. If he ſaith, *Not*; let him not then imagine, that *thought* is only an old attribute of *matter* in a ſomewhat newer faſhioned dreſs than it uſed to wear. And, without going out of my way, what hath been ſaid obviates a common ſuggeſtion, that *thinking*, tho' no mode of magnitude, or figure or motion, or in ſhort, of any of the known attributes of *matter*, may, perchance, be a mode of ſome latent and unknown quality; a ſuppoſition which apparently contradicts itſelf; for a mode of a property being known, how can that property remain ſtill unknown? If *thought*, which we are conſcious to be only a particular way of modifying ſome attribute of body, can that attribute lie concealed?

Not

Not till I can be ſuppoſed to have the idea of any particular ſort of motion, and have no idea of motion, or of ſome particular ſpecies of figure, and not be able to form a notion of extenſion.

If it be ſaid, that *thinking* is not motion or figure, or any other property of *matter* ſeparate, or compounded, but a reſult from one or more, I anſwer, that it is impoſſible any power or quality belonging to *matter* ſhould produce an effect entirely *de novo*; and conſequently, if *thought* be the reſult of any material property or properties, it can only be a new turn or appearance given to one or more old properties, which unavoidably runs us upon the abſurdity before-mentioned. That no power or quality of *matter* can produce an effect entirely *de novo*, is as plain as that it cannot produce ſomething out of nothing. The truth of this is obvious to the firſt reflections of the mind.

This ſingle argument, if it hath the evidence I apprehend to be in it, is as deciſive as a thouſand. Yet becauſe I had rather be charged with doing an unneceſſary thing, than omitting what is needful; and becauſe of two arguments equally concluſive, one man is more ſtruck with this, another with that, I add further,

Every quality of *matter*, not eſſential to it, is a mere relation. *Matter* itſelf is unchangeably the ſame. The particles of it may be

be removed nearer to, or further off from, one another, they may ſtand in this, or that ſituation, but in themſelves receive not the leaſt alteration. What difference there is, lies in this, that when ranged after this manner they make one figure, when after that another; when a greater number meet they make one kind of magnitude, when a leſs, another, as a body of a foot or inch diameter. But what are all theſe figures? They only expreſs the different relations the particles of a ſyſtem have one to the other; or all together to other bodies. What theſe ſeveral magnitudes? But the relation of more or fewer particles; the ſame holds in *motion.* Whether the particle be moved or not moved, whether it continue to move in the ſame line, or move in different, the particle, if we well conſider it, remains without all change; only that it is transferred from place to place, and by that means hath ſucceſſively a relation to different points of ſpace. He that reflects on this cannot poſſibly believe *thought* to be a mode of *matter* and *motion,* becauſe, all modes being inconteſtibly nothing but relations, or compariſons made by the mind, *thought* if a mode of *matter* would be no more; which is too abſurd for any one of common ſenſe to digeſt.

And now, were I able to advance no further in the argument, I could not repent of

the little pains I have been at to prove *thinking* not eſſential to *matter*, nor a mode of any power belonging to *matter*; for this alone effectually ſilences the atheiſtical ſceptick, who in compliment to mankind tells them they are no better than ſo many machines, and their wiſeſt thoughts and conſultations but the lucky hits of atoms and pure growth of *matter* and *motion*. This whim, I ſay, hath been ſufficiently confuted, from whence it is neceſſarily inferred that there is a ſupreme Being, who, ſhould we allow the ſoul to be material, hath given it a power of *thinking*, the conferring of which power is an act of omnipotence, and as hard to conceive as the creation of ſubſtance, In other words, that there is a God, and Creation *ex nihilo*, is no contradiction, no impoſſibility.

III. *Matter* cannot have a power of *thinking* ſupperadded to it. I do not ſay that a ſubſtance having this power cannot be ſettled in *matter*; on the contrary, if this be a proper ſenſe of ſuperadding, I own God hath ſupperadded a power of *thinking* to *matter* by ſubſtantially uniting the ſoul to the body. But my meaning (and indeed the only meaning under diſpute) is that a power of *thinking* cannot be made to inhere immediately in *matter*, or that *matter* cannot be the next and immediate ſubject of a power of *thinking*. This Particular well proved, ſhews Mr. *Locke* not

not to have been infallible, when he ſaid, that * *it is impoſſible for us, by the contemplation of our own ideas, without Revelation, to diſcover whether omnipotency hath given to ſome ſyſtems of matter, fitly diſpoſed, a power to perceive and think.* I am miſtaken if the demonſtration of this, which Mr. *Locke* thought it impoſſible to demonſtrate, doth not follow.

1. *Thinking* is utterly inconſiſtent with the diviſibility of *matter*; or a quality that will never be brought to agree to any thing that is not ſtrictly one. I ſhall prepare my way to this argument by ſeveral Propoſitions.

1. *Thinking* is an abſolute quality. Of a roſe, tho' a relative quality, a meer external denomination in the roſe, is an abſolute real ſenſation in him that ſmells it. Now, I pray, where ſhould *thinking* properly exiſt, if not in the Being that *thinks?* They who aſſert heat to be a relative quality in fire, do, in effect, ſay, it is not there at all, that it is only a name miſapplied by vulgar conceit. Whoever therefore ſuppoſes a ſubſtance to *think* (whether that ſubſtance be *matter* or *ſpirit*) muſt ſuppoſe *thinking* to be an abſolute, inherent quality, or he ſuppoſes an abſolute contradiction, that is, he ſuppoſes a ſubſtance at the ſame time doth, and doth not *think.*

2. *Thinking* is a primary quality. No property can be aſſigned of a larger extent

* Human Under. l. 4. c. 3. s. 6.

comprehending this under it. And what better proof have we than this, that motion and ſolidity are primary qualities? We paſs them for ſuch becauſe they are ideas ſo generical that we cannot go beyond them; which we ſhould be able to do if they were only modes of ſome more generical power; for the ſame reaſon, that from any determinate ſpecies of figure or motion, we can proceed to the neighbouring *genus*, and ſo on till we come to the *genus generaliſſimum*, where the ſight is terminated. Beſides, it hath been before proved, that all modes include over and above what is peculiar and diſtinguiſhing, the general idea of the attributes they are modes of; and that therefore, if *thinking* were a mode or ſome more generical attribute, we could not poſſibly be ignorant what was this attribute, becauſe the idea of it would be involved in *thinking*. But we know of no ſuch attribute, and therefore *thinking* is not a mode of it, and if not a mode of an attribute, muſt itſelf be a primary quality. *N. B.* The term *primary* applied to qualities, hath a double ſignification; for either it may be taken abſolutely ſo as to ſignify that there is no idea, excepting that of the ſubſtance, beyond the idea of the quality we call primary, in which it is founded, and in this ſenſe *thinking* and *motion* are not primary qualities, *thinking* preſuppo-

ſuppoſing a power of *thinking*, and *motion* a power of being *moved*. Or it may ſignify that there is no idea or quality more generical, of which the quality we name primary, is a mode or ſpecies; and in this ſenſe it is, we here term *thinking* and *motion* primary, *i. e.* generical qualities.

3. *Thinking* is a numerical quality, perfectly ſimple and uncompounded; not only in the ſenſe that a quality is called ſimple when it is not a collection of different qualities, which I have before ſhewn to be the caſe with *thinking*, but in the exacteſt ſenſe of that word, when a quality doth not conſiſt of parts, each of which is of the ſame kind as the whole; as the ſolidity and motion of an atom (a point of *matter* imagined ſo ſmall as to become utterly uncapable of further diviſion) are individual qualities; its ſolidity is ſo one as not to be a number of ſolidities, and its motion ſo one as not to be a ſyſtem of motions. Now in the ſame ſenſe that theſe are indiviſible qualities, I affirm *thinking* or *conſciouſneſs* to be ſo, *i. e.* no one *conſciouſneſs* can be compounded of two or more ſeveral *conſciouſneſſes*. For in caſe ſeveral *conſciouſneſſes* may unite into one, either their union deſtroys their diſtinction, or it doth not. If it doth, I deſire to know how this general *conſciouſneſs* ſubſiſts. After no other manner than a whole, conſtituted of ſeveral

parts, can exiſt without theſe parts, or a univerſal exiſt without particulars. If on the other hand theſe partial *conſciouſneſſes* after they are united together, remain diſtinct, how can they be one? In no other ſenſe than a multitude of ſands make one heap; for ſo a parcel of *conſciouſneſſes* thrown together would be a heap of *conſciouſneſſes*, not one *conſciouſneſs*. They could not approach ever the nearer; being truly one on account of their neighbourhood. Yes, ſome may ſay, they altogether form one whole *conſciouſneſs*, whereas ſeparately taken they are but pieces of *conſciouſneſs*. To expoſe the vanity of this conceit, I ſhall enter a little further into the matter. When therefore it is ſaid that *conſciouſneſs* is made up of partial *conſciouſneſſes*, the meaning muſt be that *conſciouſneſs* inheres in a Being that hath parts, and that each part hath its ſhare of the *conſciouſneſs*. Now let us ſuppoſe theſe parts removed at a conſiderable diſtance from one another; *conſciouſneſs* being an inherent quality, their ſeparation would not annihilate their *thinking*, but each muſt ſtill have its piece of *thought*. But then theſe pieces of *conſciouſneſs* thus disjoined, can no more make one *conſciouſneſs* than the *conſciouſneſſes* lodged in the heads of ſeveral men can make one. Well then, let us further try, what can be done by bringing theſe *conſciouſneſſes*

ſciouſneſſes together again. What will they gain by this contiguity? Still each part can be *conſcious* only for itſelf; it cannot ſhare in the *conſciouſneſs* of the reſt, any more than the ſolidity of one particle of *matter* can be the ſolidity of another; which is as ſelf-evident as that a thing muſt be itſelf and no other. And now where ſhall we ſeek for a common *conſciouſneſs*, that may run through all, and, like a band, tie them together? I cannot poſſibly gueſs where; and yet ſuch a common *conſciouſneſs* is neceſſary to conſtitute all theſe parts one *thinking conſcious* Being. But when all is done, that *conſciouſneſs* is an individual quality, can not be made plainer than every man's own *conſciouſneſs* proves it to him, if he will be at the trouble of the leaſt reflection in the world.

4. A ſyſtem of *matter* conſiſts of juſt ſo many diſtinct, compleat, Beings as it hath parts. Be theſe parts united after never ſo compact a manner, their diſtinctneſs is not hereby in the leaſt endangered, each of them remaining, as it was before, a compleat Being in itſelf, capable of being divided from the reſt, and exiſting ſeperate and independent from them. I deny not but a ſyſtem of *matter*, may, if God ſo pleaſe, be rendered indiviſible by any created power; but this alters not the caſe, becauſe in itſelf, and to almighty power, it is as diviſible,

as ever, and, if divisible, must have parts antecedent to their actual division.

5. Every primary or generical power, inhering in the whole of any system, is made up of qualities of the same kind, inhering in the several constituent parts. Thus the motion of the whole consists of the motions of the parts, and the solidity of the whole is the total of the solidities of the parts. This is too plain to need or be capable of proof. Tho' if it be desired, I will give the reason why it is so. All specifical powers having their original from a combination of particles, (excepting the species of motion) are really but so many names to signify these combinations; and a combination, always supposing more than one, cannot be attributed to any single particle. But every particle is solid, is moveable, and of a certain magnitude, from whence result the *solidity*, *motion*, and *magnitude*, of a system, which would be eternally destitute of all those properties, if they were not first found in the separate particles.

6. If actual *thinking* can never be seated in a system of *matter*, neither can a power. He that proves the one, proves the other; unless you can reconcile your being absolutly and for ever unable to do a thing, and your having a power to do it.

The Argument sum'd up.

And now laying all these Propositions together, the conclusion is that a system of

of *matter* cannot poſſibly have a power of *thinking* ſuperadded to it. For it cannot *think*, but *thinking* muſt inhere in it, becauſe *thinking* is an abſolute quality; and the *conſciouſneſs* that inheres in the whole, muſt, as it is a primary quality, conſiſt of the *conſciouſneſſes* of the parts; but *conſciouſneſs* being a ſimple individual thing, cannot be made up of partial *conſciouſneſſes*, and for that reaſon can never have its abode in a ſyſtem of *matter*, where it cannot be ſuppoſed to exiſt, unleſs compounded.

If this argument be not concluſive, I deſpair of knowing when an argument is ſo. Nothing can have a more promiſing appearance. Nor is it all weakened by matter of fact, in nature or art, both which, it is pretended, furniſh us with innumerable inſtances of powers and qualities in the whole, reſulting from the contributions of the parts, and yet not to be found in the parts disjunctly taken. Thus the roundneſs of a globe ariſes from the parts terminating after ſuch a manner, that the whole compaſs of the ſurface is equally diſtant from the center. Nevertheleſs the parts ſingly conſidered are none of them round, tho' altogether they form that figure. Thus the power of a *roſe* to produce ſo agreeable a ſmell, is owing to the peculiar texture and diſpoſition of its inſenſible parts, which detached from one another, or diſpoſed of in a different way, are void

of

of that power. Thus the power of a *clock* to determine the time of the day, proceeds from the ſituation, the comparative bigneſs, and motion of the wheels and ſprings that compoſe it; which notwithſtanding, the ſubject of this power is only the *whole clock*, not any one piece of it. And why, in like manner, may not a *conſcious* Being be made up of parts, which ſingly taken are not *conſcious*, tho' when combined they are ſo?

A very moderate degree of attention will diſcover the impertinence of this objection; for (omitting other anſwers that might be given to it) none of the powers or qualities here enumerated are of a primary nature. Roundneſs is not a compoſition of parts that are round, becauſe only a mode of figure. And the ſame hold of the other qualities alledged, which as far as they are really inherent qualities, (and we are concerned with them no further) are mixed modes. As to mention only the virtue of a *clock* in meaſuring the hours; this, as far as it ſignifies a power abſolutely reſiding in the *clock*, is no more than a ſkilful mixture of certain modes of figure, magnitude and motion. And what then are the rules we follow, when from theſe we argue to *thinking*, which, it hath been evinced, is a primary quality? Let it be once made appear that the ſolidity of a material ſyſtem is not the ſum of the ſolidities of the parts, and I will readily acknowledge

ledge myſelf miſtaken in aſſerting the *conſciouſneſs* of the ſame ſyſtem to be a maſs of the *conſciouſneſſes* of the parts.

But is not *extenſion* in the ſame rank of properties as *ſolidity?* Now an extended ſyſtem is made up of parts unextended.

To this trifling objection, if I muſt return an anſwer, I ſay, that in caſe *matter* admits not of infinite diviſions (as this objection ſuppoſes it doth not) *extenſion* is no primary quality, but *magnitude* or *ſpatiality*, having under it theſe two general modes; an atom, which is *matter* poſſeſſing a ſingle point of ſpace; or *quid extenſum*, when ſeveral particles of *matter*, ſettling in points of ſpace next adjoining to one another, give occaſion for conſidering them as one body or ſyſtem.

From what hath been ſaid, it follows that tho' perfect ſtrangers to the inmoſt eſſenſes of ſoul and body, we are yet able to demonſtrate that the ſoul is not, at leaſt, a ſyſtem of *matter*, from the utter irreconcileableneſs of the properties of the one and the other, *i. e.* of *thinking* and *diviſibility*. And our mathematicians tell us, that it is of the nature of *matter* to exiſt in parcels or ſyſtems, and impoſſible it ſhould do otherwiſe, being infinitely diviſible. But however that be, a Learned Perſon hath well obſerved, in a Letter I received from him, that it is the opinion of all our modern ſcepticks, that the ſoul is a ſyſtem of *matter*; ſo that, if his obſervation

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be true, (as in all probability it is) the argument here managed, at once disarms all these men. And then, as the same Gentleman further remarks, on supposition there be indivisible particles of *matter*, and that such an indivisible particle may be a *thinking* substance, yet the natural immortality of the soul would be safe enough. And this is the reason why our scepticks never go upon that supposition, because they are not concerned to disprove the immateriality of the soul, any further than they can thereby disprove its natural immortality.

There is only one thing commonly urged against this argument, yet behind; which, because if I concealed it, some would be ready to judge it was for its strength, I shall briefly consider. This argument, say they, may as well be turned to prove immaterial substance incapable of *thinking*, if *extension* be not shut out of its idea. To which I reply.

1. *Extension* is no part of our idea of immaterial substance. All we know of it is, that it thinks, is not solid, and, by consequence from its *thinking*, is indivisible too. But neither of these properties, as far as we are acquainted with them, having any relation to space, or dependance on it, from them we can get no assistance into our enquiry, after what manner a spirit or immaterial substance exists in space. It is enough we know it not to be divisible, like a material system: whether

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as it is indiviſible, it be likewiſe unextended; or whether, if endowed with a kind of expanſion, this or any other word in our language doth properly expreſs it, we have no room to argue for want of ideas; nor can this want of ideas be fairly improved to the diſadvantage of immaterial ſubſtance, becauſe againſt a capacity of *thinking* in a ſyſtem of *matter*, we argue not from any thing unknown, but from an imperfection we certainly know to be in it, namely, its *diviſibility*.

2. This objection is founded in ſomething, which I think it impoſſible to prove, viz. That every ſimple Being, every Being ſtrictly one, is *minimum natura*. We find this to be true in fact of a ſolid Being, and in its ſolidity meet with the cauſe of it. For a ſolid ſyſtem being ſolid throughout, by reaſon of which ſolidity every particle hath a diſtinct ſuperficies of its own, though never ſo many particles unite together, from whence flows the *extenſion* of *matter*, each of them will after all continue a compleat Being in itſelf, actually diſtinct, and therefore ſeperate from all the reſt. But now from ſolid to unſolid Being, from material *expanſion*, to immaterial, *non valet conſequentia*. According to our idea of *immenſity*, there is ſome ſort of *expanſion* in the divine eſſence, and he that ſhould aſſert of this adoreable eſſence, that it is (I will not ſay actually diviſible, for its infinity alone may

ſecure

ſecure it from that, but) made up of proper parts, would be thought greatly to detract from the perfection of the ever-bleſſed and moſt glorious God.

3. If you ſtill perſiſt that all *expanſion* implies *diviſibility*; for once, we will ſuppoſe that it doth. Upon this ſuppoſition I affirm that the ſoul is unextended, and challenge any one to ſhew me the abſurdity of it. The ſoul may hereby ſeem to be ſhrunk into an abſolute parvitude, a poor ſolitary punct, but there is really no ſuch matter: for on condition *expanſion* and parts always go together, the ſupreme eſſence cannot be allowed to be expanded; but, though not expanded in a proper ſenſe, you will not therefore imagine that it muſt dwindle into a point. Whatever be the relation that *thought* hath to *ſpace*, it is plain, it cannot exiſt in it, after the manner of an extended thing, unleſs we can firſt bring ourſelves to conceive that *thought* hath quantity, and may be larger or ſhorter, broader or narrower, *&c.* nor yet as a point, unleſs it be firſt allowed, that a ſingle point may be capable of ten thouſand different modifications, and why ſhould it be deemed impoſſible for the *thinking* ſubſtance to enjoy the ſame manner of exiſtence as *thought*, which is its action? This from the eſſence of God, I am ſenſible, is a way of arguing ſome men will little regard; nor was it deſigned for them: but ſuch who, with me, believe

believe God to be an immaterial ſubſtance, though not of my mind, who think it demonſtrable, that the ſoul likwiſe is of a nature entirely diſtinct from *matter*. I have now done with the firſt argument, which proves that a ſyſtem of *matter* can never *think*. Thoſe which follow are leveled againſt all *matter*, without conſidering it in a ſyſtem.

11. The power of *thinking* is not eſſential to *matter*; but we have the ſame reaſon to believe it eſſential to that in us which *thinks*, as to conclude ſolidity eſſential to body; and therefore the ſoul, or that in us which *thinks*, is not *matter*. Solidity is not *matter*. Solidity is reckoned eſſential to body, becauſe it is a primary quality, or becauſe we conſider it as immediately united to the idea of material ſubſtance without the intervention of any third idea, whereas our ideas of ſeparable qualities, ſuch as *fluidity*, *ſquareneſs*, *globoſity*, *&c.* lead us to the idea of *extenſion*, in which they have their foundation. Now foraſmuch as we have not the idea of any property more radical than this of a power of *thinking*, either let us confeſs ourſelves uncertain whether ſolidity is ſo inſeparable from material ſubſtance, that it cannot be taken away without the deſtruction of the ſubſtance, or be ſo ingenuous to own, that the *thinking* faculty is eſſential to the ſoul; from whence it will of neceſſity follow, that the ſoul is immaterial. Upon the

the whole then, having the ſame evidence for both, we ought not to doubt of the immateriality of *thinking* ſubſtance, till we are diſpoſed to doubt whether *matter* be eſſentially ſolid.

111. There is the greateſt reaſon to believe it impoſſible and a contradiction for the power of *thinking* to be ſuperadded to *matter*, tho' a perfect Monad, becauſe it hath all the appearance of a groſs abſurdity, the ſubſtance pre-exiſting, for any power whatever to be afterwads brought into it, entirely diſtinct from all the powers it had before. A ſubſtance can have no generical power, but what was produced at the moment itſelf had a beginning. Are any properties eſſential? Or, which comes to the ſame, can a ſubſtance be created, and certain properties not exiſt as neceſſary appendages to it? On preſumption of every body's agreeing with me that it cannot, I demand further, Whether the dependence be mutual, ſo that as the ſubſtance cannot be created without its eſſenial attributes, theſe attributes cannot be produced, but the ſame act of power muſt at once give being to the attributes and the ſubſtance they are eſſential to? I ſhall explain myſelf by an inſtance—Tho' the ſubſtance of *matter* is incapable of receiving exiſtence from a fiat of God, that will not at the ſame inſtant beſtow it on ſolidity and magnitude, can ſolidity and magnitude be created

created without the cotemporary production of any ſubſtance? It lies on thoſe who ſay, *they may*, to ſhew why the dependance of the attributes upon the ſubſtance for their creation ſhould not be the ſame, as of the ſubſtance on the attributes. If the anſwer be, no, then we are obliged either to grant, that as ſolidity can never be produced, unleſs when a ſubſtance is created to which it is eſſential, the ſame is true of all other generical powers and qualities, or to demonſtrate ſuch a difference in their natures, as is the foundation of this difference in the manner of their exiſtence, that when one attribute cannot, another may, be introduced into being at a diſtinct time from the ſubſtance it is placed in, and by a diſtinct act of omnipotence. This I doubt we ſhall never be able to do. In the mean while I dare appeal to the world, whether it doth not ſhock common ſenſe, that a primary attribute, not originally in a ſubſtance, ſhould be afterwards made to agree to it? Is not the creating a new power, the ſubſtance being firſt made, every whit as unintelligible as the doctrine of ſubſtantial accidents? In plain truth, for the philoſophicalneſs of them, they ſeem to me to be exactly matched; and I ſee not, but if a power may be created ſeparately from the ſubſtance, *i. e.* without at the ſame time creating the ſubſtance, it may as well be made to exiſt without inhering in any ſubſtance at all; there being little or no

difference, that I can discern, between creating a power separate as to time from any substance, and the making it to exist separate as to space, or any inhesion it hath in it. When independent on the substance in its production, what makes it dependent in its after existence? The substance, which is not the foundation of its being, appears not necessary to its support. Of one substance added to another I can conceive, and that the same power is capable of different modifications; but to talk of creating a new power, and superadding it to a substance hath very much the sound of nonsense.

Secondary and modal qualities may be superinduced, forasmuch as the addition of these is only working upon the old materials, or another way of disposing and managing the qualities before existing, not the beginning of any quality entirely new. Among all the infinite changes and vicissitudes, which the parts of this visible world pass under, all the new forms and appearances that *matter* ever put on, the number of primary qualities is, and hath been, still the same. One or two properties of this nature furnish out this great variety of scenes, and are capable of shifting into ten thousand times more. And why then should we reckon it possible for a primary quality to be superadded, when an instance of this was never known among the numberless alterations that have happened to *matter?*

Let

Let us try whether *motion*, *gravitation*, *vegetation*, *&c.* are inſtances of this kind. *Motion* is not eſſential to *matter*. But a capacity of being moved is, and if *matter* move, or rather be moved by external pulſion, it is not by a new power put into it.

By *gravitation* is meant that force by which a body is carried to its center, without the impulſe of other bodies. Now that there is no ſuch principle truly implanted in bodies, I think admits of demonſtration, *e.g.* a ſtone falling to the earth is imagined to move by virtue of this principle. But the queſtion is, whether this principle be lodged in the ſtone itſelf. If it be anſwered in the negative, then *gravitation* is no proper inherent quality in the ſtone, and conſequently not at all correſpondent to *thought*, which is a quality abſolutely reſiding in the ſubſtance that thinks. If it be ſaid, yes, then upon ſuppoſition the ſpace for ſome diſtant round the ſtone were made perfectly empty, and did ſo remain, yet this ſtone would have a tendency to move. Inform me which way? Towards the earth? But why thither? The communication being cut off by the interjacent void, the earth hath no more relation to the ſtone than the moon, or any other planet. Muſt it tend towards the earth, becauſe that is downwards? Not ſo neither; for in ſuch a Vacuum, as this ſtone is ſuppoſed to be in, there is neither up nor down, any more than in the extramundane ſpace. It muſt there-

fore endeavour to move every way, if at all, having no principle of choice to direct it this way rather than that; and an equal endeavour to move all ways at the same time, keeping it, as it must needs do, in a perfect rest, is equivalent to no tendency at all. The experiments of things descending in Vacuo create me no difficulty. On the contrary, I am extremely pleased with them, as they prove, not that bodies have a principle of *motion* within themselves, (I have shown before that this cannot be) but that *matter* is continually expressed by some invisible agent. And so, this admirable phænomenon is a plain argument not only of the Being but perpetual Energy and Providence of the First Cause.

In a vegetable two things offer to be considered, *organization* and *nutrition*. Its *organization* is an instance of infinite skill in the framer, but with regard to the vegetable is nothing else but an apt arrangement of the parts, by which it comes to have a beauty and a proportion it wanted before, as fitted to serve the uses it was originally designed for. Whether God display his wisdom upon *matter* in the productions of nature, or man in the productions of art, in neither case is there any new quality added to *matter*. Man only modifies it, and God doth no more; all the difference being in the perfection of the work; as the same words are capable of being cast into an elegant and rational discourse,

or

or the contrary, according to the abilities and genius of the writer. *Nutrition* proceeds not from any faculty infused into plants, being, in respect of them, only a proper structure of the vessels to receive and distribute the alimental juices; and, as to the other concurring causes, only *matter* and *motion* under the direction of a wise Providence; still no new quality is superadded entirely different from the qualities essentially belonging to *matter*.

To conclude, the superintendency of an Almighty Being first laid as a *Postulatum*, there is nothing unaccountable in the revolutions of the planets round their centers, in the propagation of the species, *&c.* nothing but what may be expected from *matter* in the hands of infinite power and wisdom, without the addition of any new powers. And now judge you, if the following passages in * Mr. *Locke* reach the controversy between him and the Bishop. The idea of *matter* is an extended solid substance; wherever there is such a substance there is *matter*; and the essence of *matter*, whatever other qualities not contained in that essence it shall please God to superadd to it. For example, God creates an extended solid substance without the superadding any thing else to it, and so we may consider it at rest; to some parts of it he superadds *motion*, but it hath still the essence of *matter*; other parts of it he frames into

* Let. 3. p. 797.

plants with all the excellences of vegetation, life and beauty, which are to be found in a roſe or a peach tree, *&c.* to other parts he adds ſenſe and ſpontaneous motion, and thoſe other properties that are to be found in an elephant. Hitherto it is not doubted but the power of God may go; but if one ventures to go one ſtep further, and ſay, God may give to *matter*, *thought*, *reaſon* and *volition*, as well as *ſenſe* and *ſpontaneous motion*, there are men ready preſently to limit the power of the Omnipotent Creator, and tell us he cannot do it. Again, * The planets have revolutions about certain remote centers, which I would have any one explain or make conceivable by the bare eſſence, or natural powers depending on the eſſence of *matter* in general, without ſomething added to that eſſence which we cannot conceive elſewhere. If to the * individuals of each ſpecies God had not ſuperadded a power of propagation, the ſpecies had periſhed with thoſe individuals.

Is this reaſoning worthy of ſo great a Philoſopher? Excepting the inſtances of ſenſe and ſpontaneous motion in animals (before conſidered) in which Mr. *Locke* begs the queſtion, all the other properties which Mr. *Locke* ſaith are ſuperadded to *matter*, really conclude no more than that *matter* may be figured and moved by almighty power in ten thouſand

* P. 398. † P. 400

thouſand ways, than which nothing more true; and therefore becauſe the qualities of *matter* may be acted upon and new modified, *matter* may receive a new quality of a kind perfectly differing from all the qualities it was poſſeſſed of before; than which, in my opinion, nothing can be more falſe.

IV. I ſhall finiſh with a conſideration which makes it altogether unreaſonable to ſuppoſe the *ſoul* is *matter*, even tho' by the omnipotent Will of the Creator a ſyſtem of *matter* were capable of becoming a cogitative Being. *Thinking* belongs not eſſentially to *matter*, neither is it a mode of ſome other power originally in *matter*, but muſt, in order to have a place in it, be ſuperinduced by creative power, and exerted by *matter*, not conſidered as *matter*, but by a faculty quite foreign to its original nature and capacity. But now, for ought appears, a power of *thinking* may be natural to immaterial ſubſtance; nay there are very ſtrong probabilities that it is ſo. For,

1. The faculty of *thinking* is the top of primary qualities, the original ſource of all thoſe excellencies which ſet ſome parts of the creation ſo vaſtly above the reſt. And (to borrow the words of Dr. *Sherlock*) "Can "we think the greateſt perfection, in a cre- "ated nature, hath no ſubject to which it "eſſentially belongs? Which makes the "greateſt perfection in nature the moſt

" periſhing and mutable thing; for if there " be no ſubject or nature to which it eſſen- " tially belong, it is a mere periſhing ac- " cident, which might never have been, and " in time may never be again." The exiſtence of a body once ſuppoſed, *extenſion* and *ſolidity* exiſt by neceſſary conſequence. Now, as I take it, neceſſity of exiſtence, even that which is only conſequential, is the glory of an attribute, becauſe it is a nearer approach to that Being who exiſts, not indeed by a conſequential, but by an abſolute neceſſity of nature. And if this conſequential neceſſity belong to qualities of ſo little ſignificancy, as *extenſion*, and *ſolidity* comparatively are, the like glory cannot be denied to the power of *thinking*, which ſo incomparably excells them. And it being granted that there is ſome ſubſtance to which this quality is eſſential, it can be only that which is immaterial; for, as to material ſubſtance, the reaſons have been given before why *thinking* cannot be an eſſential attribute of that. It is no prejudice to what I am now contending for, that ſymmetry of parts, organization, and vegetative life, are by much preferable to mere *extenſion* and *ſolidity*, and yet not therefore eſſential to bodies; for theſe are not primary qualities, and ſo not really diſtinct from the eſſential attributes of *matter* in which they always virtually exiſt, cauſing no other alteration in thoſe parcels of *matter*, where they exiſt

exiſt formally and expreſly, but only this, that the eſſential attributes are repreſented in a different light than before. This objection then doth not touch the argument, as it is brought to prove a power of *thinking* eſſential to immaterial Beings, however, it may ſhew the inconcluſiveneſs as to *actual thinking*; which, I believe, Dr. *Sherlock* aimed to prove by it.

2 This argument is ſomewhat ſtrengthened by that which follows. God is a Spirit, and *thinking* doth eſſentially and neceſſarily belong to his Being. If it be proper to aſcribe a faculty of *thinking* to the divine eſſence, which is, and cannot but be always actually cogitative; if, I ſay, this be allowable, (and I have no reaſon to believe but it is, for argument's ſake) the power of *thinking* belongs neceſſarily to God as a Spirit; the act and the perfection of *thinking*, as he is a Spirit infinite, eternal and independent. That the power of *thinking* is a neceſſary attribute of God as a Spirit, is evident from this conſideration, that otherwiſe God would want that *ſimplicity* which we cannot but acknowledge is to be found in the moſt perfect Being. The divine eſſence is immaterial or ſpiritual; if therefore this faculty of *cogitation* does not neceſſarily belong to God as immaterial, it doth not neceſſarily belong to the divine eſſence, which will infer too great a diſtinction between the eſſence and the attributes of God, a diſtinction

tinction much greater than that between the ſubſtance of *matter*, and its eſſential properties. All that is further required to make this argument good is, that immaterial ſubſtance, when applied to God, and to infinite created Beings, hath the ſame ſignification. It is poſſible, for any thing I can prove to the contrary, that immaterial ſubſtances may differ among themſelves, as much as they all differ from thoſe that are material; and the *ſpirituality* of God may be of a nature tranſcendently ſuperior to the *ſpirituality* of all other Beings. This, I ſay, is poſſible, and on ſuppoſition the thing be really ſo, my argument comes to nothing. But then on the other hand, I have never as yet read or heard any good reaſon, why we may not underſtand the term *ſpiritualy* as univocal, to whatever immaterial Being we attribute it; and till ſuch reaſon be produced, I muſt beg leave ſo to underſtand it. It derogates not from the honour of God's attributes, that his creatures are wiſe, and juſt, and holy too: the characteriſticks of finite and infinite ſufficiently diſtinguiſh them. And why ſhould it be thought incredible for God to communicate a copy of his eſſence, as he hath done of his attributes? Doth one tend more than the other to confound God with his creatures? Not at all; *finite*, and *infinite*, are as good marks of diſtinction in one caſe as in the other.

The

The eſſence of God is immenſe and boundleſs, that of his creatures finite and limited.

Theſe reaſons, not to mention others, make it highly probable that immaterial ſubſtances are neceſſarily poſſeſt of the power of *thinking*. And is it to be conceived, that God would ſo confound the natures and properties of things, as to confer a power eſſential to one kind of ſubſtance upon another, to which it doth not at all agree, and wherein it muſt be ſorted with other powers of ſo different a nature, as ſcarce to have any thing in common with it but bare exiſtence? Who can believe this to be likely?

On the credit of the foregoing arguments in vindication of the *ſoul*'s *immateriality*, I ſhall take the liberty to conclude with an act of devotion.

A PRAYER.

A PRAYER.

O Moſt glorious God! Thou art the ſupreme, uncreated, and eternal Spirit, and thou haſt made man in thine own image. I behold thee after a ſort in all thy works. Thy greatneſs is declared by the immenſity of the heavens, and their bright innumerable hoſts ſpeak thy power and thy wiſdom; thy goodneſs is diffuſed with the light, breathes in the air, flows in the ſea, and is perpetually fruitful in the earth; but all theſe, the heavens, the earth, and the ſea, are excellent great, and wonderful, without knowing it, they glorify thee, and deſign it not: but there is a ſpirit in man, and the inſpiration of the Almighty giveth him underſtanding.

To contemplate thy perfections, and, though after a faint and moſt imperfect manner, to reflect their likeneſs, is the peculiar glory of mankind, to whom thou haſt communicated a ſpiritual and intelligent nature, allied to worlds of nobler Beings, and in its very frame enjoying the pledges of immortality. O let not this Spirit, which thou haſt made diſgrace its original, and miſimploy its powers; let it not forget its dignity, and contradict its expectations! Thou haſt made it like thy ſelf; let a more entire conformity to thee be its moſt ardent wiſh, its continual endeavour. Thou haſt

haſt made it utterly unlike all things here below; by mixing with theſe inferior things let it not grow into an admiration of and fondneſs for them, and alienation from the divine life.

O my God, purify, exalt, and actuate thy own work! Diffuſe thy holy light over the region of my underſtanding, inſpire my heart with the ſacred warmth of thy love, and let me feel myſelf by a ſweet and irreſiſtible attraction drawn away to thee. My ſoul is ſpiritual in its eſſence, let it be ſpiritual in its deſires; let it keep under the body, trample on the world, be ſuperior to time and ſenſe, and with a reſtleſs activity ſtretch itſelf towards immortality, that when ſet at liberty from this load of fleſh, as ſhortly it will be, it may have the full poſſeſſion and enjoyment of itſelf, and together with myriads of happy beings find itſelf inſeparably united to thee, the Father of Spirits, and immoveable center of their repoſe.

SOME

THOUGHTS

Concerning the

Proofs of a FUTURE STATE

FROM

REASON.

Occaſioned by a DISCOURSE

Of the Rev^d. Mr. *Joſeph Hallett*, jun. on the ſame Subject.

Non enim is ego ſum qui animum ſimul cum homine interire putem, tantumq; mentis lumen poſſe exſtingui; ſed potius, certo tempore emenſo, ad immortalitatem redire. *Cicer. de Conſolat.*

That the righteous ſhould be as the wicked, that be far from thee: ſhall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Gen. xviii. 25.

1730.

THE

PREFACE.

THERE are three different opinions on the queſtion *concerning a* future ſtate, *as it ſtands on the foot of* Reaſon. *The* firſt *is, that* Reaſon *affords no proof at all of* a future ſtate, *whether of rewards, or puniſhments. The* ſecond, *that* a future ſtate *is capable of being proved, but not of rewards. The* third, *that* Reaſon *leads men to believe* a life *after this, in which they ſhall receive according to what they have done in the body, whether it be* good *or* evil. *According to the firſt,* Reaſon *leaves ſuch as are deſtitute of the light of* Revelation, *equally without* hope, *or* fear, *as to any after-ſtate of exiſtence: according to the ſecond, it leaves them without* hope, *or in poſſeſſion only of ſuch a hope as is next to none, but not without* fear: *the third ſuppoſes them to have ſufficient ground for* both, *according to their prevailing temper, and the general courſe of their behaviour.*

The Author of ſome late Diſcourſes maintains the firſt of theſe opinions with a degree of zeal and aſſurance, that promiſes nothing

ſhort of demonſtration, *and can, indeed, be juſtified only by that. At leaſt, if this be not his opinion, I cannot tell what to make of his Diſcourſe, particularly, of ſuch paſſages as this*— " Take away the Goſpel, and we *Gentiles* " have no proof of a future ſtate—Take away " the promiſes of the Goſpel, and we muſt " deſpair of life and happineſs beyond the " grave." *p.* 379. *Or of that* notable principle, *of which he may, for me, challenge the honour of being the firſt* diſcoverer, *and continue ſole and unenvied* poſſeſſor, *that*, in theſe caſes, there is no medium between ſtrict demonſtration and mere poſſibility, *p.* 284. *for, ſurely, he does not think there is a* ſtrict demonſtration *for a ſtate of* puniſhment *after death, and a* mere poſſibility, *that is, no proof at all, of any* rewards. *I ſhall therefore take it for granted, that he is in the ſentiment firſt mentioned; and I will freely own, that even this to me appears greatly preferable to that of ſome others; it being but equal, that if men have their* hopes *taken from them, they ſhould be likewiſe eaſed of their* fears, *that they may not be in a worſe condition than the beaſts of the field.*

But hath not Mr. Hallett *himſelf a* reſerve *of miſery for the* Heathens, *tho' it be by them unforeſeen? To what ſtate God will then (in the day of Judgment) condemn the Heathen World, who have never heard the Goſpel, I will not now inquire. This much is certain, that their puniſhment ſhall be no greater than their deſerts,* *p.* 378.

p. 378. *This being doubtfully expreſſed, I have been willing to take him in the moſt charitable ſenſe, and moſt conſiſtent with his general principle, of the* impoſſibility of proving a future ſtate by the light of nature, viz. *that the puniſhment of the Heathens will conſiſt in their being condemned to a ſtate of utter inſenſibility, or annihilation (theſe two being in effect the ſame) which he had reaſon to ſay ſhall be tolerable, in compariſon of that miſery which they who have not lived in obedience to the rules of the Goſpel ſhall eternally feel. However, if I have miſtaken him, it is of no great conſequence, having taken notice in its proper place, that if the Heathens ſhall be puniſhed in another life for their wicked actions in this, it is altogether fit they ſhould have warning of it from* their own Reaſon, *that they may not ſeem to be deceived into miſery; nor is it to be conceived that a* merciful God *would leave them without all ſuch witneſs.*

Tho' I have declared for the opinion of the Heathens paſſing into a ſtate of non-exiſtence, as rather to be choſen than that which makes them neceſſarily miſerable, yet I muſt needs think the third and laſt, according to which they are capable of being puniſhed or rewarded, hath manifeſtly the advantage of either of theſe two; being more agreeable to the doctrine of holy ſcripture, *better fitted to wipe off all aſperſions from the Perfections and Providence of God, and of greater ſervice in diſputing with the enemies of*

our Religion. Tell an Infidel, that the Heathen World are, or may be, univerſally and unavoidably in a ſtate of damnation, *he will be ſo far from a diſpoſition to embrace* Chriſtianity *ever the ſooner for delivering ſuch a doctrine, that he will be invincibly prejudiced againſt it on this very account, as abhorrent to the natural notions of mens minds. If you do not ſhock him to ſuch a degree as this, but only endeavour to perſuade him that without a* Revelation *men have nothing at all to expect after death, either good, or evil, ſuppoſing he is one that believes* a future ſtate *to be a plain dictate of* Reaſon, *he will not think the more favourably of that Religion which denies he hath any evidence for* a future ſtate, *when he himſelf is very poſitive that he hath. If, on the contrary, his notion be that there is no after-life, and you, that would make a convert of him to Chriſtianity, allow that his notion is grounded in* Reaſon, *or not repugnant to it, he will never trouble himſelf to enquire, what that which you call* Revelation *ſaith about the matter, looking upon it as a thing incredible, that after God had for ſo long a time left men to periſh like the beaſts (for any thing their* Reaſon *could prove to the contrary) he ſhould by a* ſupernatural Revelation *promiſe eternal life and happineſs to ſome, and threaten others with eternal puniſhment. And, eſpecially, would he be inclined to reaſon thus, if a wicked life made him unwilling to ſuppoſe there is any after-reckoning, which I fancy is the caſe as to much the* greateſt part *of*

thoſe

thoſe who are enemies to the faith of the Goſpel; perhaps of all *who believe no more of another world than they do of the truth of* Chriſtianity. *Such men are glad of any pretence for their infidelity, and could hardly have one more plauſible than this, that while their own* Reaſon *tells them nothing of a life to come, all that profeſs* Chriſtianity *believe rewards and puniſhments that are everlaſting.*

Againſt theſe two ſorts of Deiſts *we are moſt likely to combat with ſucceſs upon the principles eſpouſed and defended in the following Diſcourſe; againſt the* latter, *by ſhewing them that* Reaſon *teaches* a future ſtate *as well as* Revelation, *and the neceſſity of mens reſtraining their inclination, and living in the practice of all virtue and piety, if they hope to be happy in that ſtate; and that, therefore, they will entirely miſs of their aim, which is a licence to act uncontrouled, in refuſing to come under the yoke of the Goſpel, ſince, beſides the* divine right *which the Goſpel hath to their obedience, tho' not acknowledged, there is another yoke which they will not be able to ſhake off, I mean that of* natural Religion *(as to the great lines of duty co-incident with* Revelation*) and the awe of a* judgment to come: *againſt the* former, *by convincing them, that* Revelation *conſpires with* Reaſon *in requiring the ſame duties, and enforcing them by the ſame general motive of a ſtate of recompences after this life is ended; with this mighty advantage on the ſide of* Revelation, *that it gives a plainer and fuller*

repreſentation of the whole duty of man than was ever done by unaſſiſted Reaſon, *compleats the evidence of* a future ſtate, *brings to light thoſe ſecrets of it which the human underſtanding, involved in miſts of ignorance and error, could not penetrate, and ſupplies every thing that was before wanting to render this motive to a holy and religious life, from the conſideration of an unſeen and everlaſting world, as ſtrong and perſuaſive as it was well capable of being made; which I have endeavoured to ſhew in the laſt chapter of this Eſſay. So that there is no need of having recourſe to* the impoſſibility of proving a future ſtate from the light of nature, *in order to prove the great* expediency *of the* Chriſtian Revelation; *and much leſs that we may the more eaſily prevail with the* Deiſts, *laying aſide their prejudices, to examine impartially the reaſons by which the truth of our Religion is eſtabliſhed. So far is Mr.* Hallett's *ſcheme from promoting this deſirable end, the converſion of the* Deiſts *to* Chriſtianity, *that ſcarce any thing, in my apprehenſion, could obſtruct it more.*

The rational proofs *of* a future ſtate *are not without their uſe to* Chriſtians *themſelves, tending to give them a juſter and nobler idea of the Religion they profeſs; the excellency of which doth not lie in its being a ſyſtem of* doctrines *and* precepts *altogether independent of natural* Reaſon, *and of which that is no judge. What is it ſets the Religion of* Chriſt *ſo much above*

that

that of Moſes? *Is it not chiefly this, that the latter is made up, almoſt wholly, of* poſitive inſtitutions, *the former hath hardly any ſuch, laying the main ſtreſs on thoſe duties which are of univerſal and unchangeable obligation; one abounds with promiſes of temporal bleſſings, the other of bleſſings ſpiritual, heavenly, and eternal? As much as to ſay, the Religion of* Jeſus *is in the eye of* Reaſon *the moſt lovely and perfect. Conſequently, whoever demonſtrates the intrinſick beauty of holineſs, and the foundation which the commands of the Goſpel have in the* Reaſon *of mens minds, and the* Nature *of things; whoever goes further, and ſhews the doctrines of* Chriſtianity *to be either the reſult of the beſt and pureſt* Reaſon, *an improvement upon it, or not contrary to it, does good ſervice to the cauſe of the Goſpel, and, if he does it from an inward veneration to Chriſt and his Religion, is to be eſteemed a better friend to both than another who, in all matters of faith or practice, looks only to the evidence and authority of* Revelation; *which is putting the* Chriſtian Religion *upon much the ſame level with the* Jewiſh. *Among the doctrines of the Goſpel, which we ſhould expect to be not only conſiſtent with* Reaſon, *but taught by it, that of* future recompences *is one; and when the Chriſtian finds that this is actually the caſe, that* Reaſon *proclaims a judgment to come as well as* Revelation, *tho' it does not ſet it in ſo clear and affecting a view, he hath a pleaſure which the man, who never obſerved this*

harmony between Reaſon *and* Revelation, *however pious he may be, is a ſtranger to*; *and, other things being equal, is leſs likely to make ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience. Nay, the homage which ſuch a one pays to the* Divine Being *is more compleat*; *for he contemplates God both as the God of* Nature *and the God of* Grace, *and hears him ſpeaking to him in* divers manners, *by his works, and in his word, by his own conſcience, by the univerſal Reaſon of mankind, by the Prophets and Apoſtles, and by his own Son, the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his Perſon*; *he attends to the voice of God in whatever way directed to him, and reverences every notification of his will, and certainly then is very unjuſtly charged with not having a due regard to* Revelation, *which is* one *of thoſe ways in which God hath manifeſted himſelf to his creatures, and by him eſteemed the moſt perfect, becauſe his regard to* that *is not joined with a neglect of* all the reſt.

It is a further ſatisfaction to the good Chriſtian, who hath taken his faith *wholly from the* Bible, *when he is praiſing God for the many ineſtimable benefits he enjoys as a* diſciple of Jeſus, *to reflect that thoſe, the much greater part of the world, to whom the glad tidings of the Goſpel were never made known, are not utterly abandoned by* the Author of their beings, *or cared for no further than relates to the intereſts of this animal and periſhing life*; *but that their* common Parent, whoſe tender mercies

are

are over all his works, *hath provided that they ſhall not want any needful means for their knowing and performing the ſervice he expects from them, and will reward their well meant endeavours to pleaſe him with more diſtinguiſhing and valuable marks of his favour than the preſent ſtate of things affords. One of this temper doth not underſtand the way of magnifying the* Grace *of God by contracting the bounds of it, nor* is his eye evil, becauſe God is good. *On the contrary, his Religion having obliged him to the moſt extenſive charity and benevolence, and thereby ſtrengthened the happy biaſs he received from* Nature, *he cannot but be moſt delighted with that view of* divine Providence, *and feel himſelf moſt powerfully excited by it to the love of God, which repreſents happineſs as a thing attainable by all reaſonable beings, tho' with a ſovereign variety of degrees.*

I muſt beg leave for one remark more on this head, and that is, that the arguments from Reaſon *for* a future ſtate of rewards *have a peculiar force and beauty in them when applyed to* Chriſtians, *ſuch, I mean, as deſerve the glorious name they are called by. Mr.* Hallett *ſeems unwilling to allow that there ever was one truly good man among the* Heathens. *Whether he had ſufficient grounds for ſo hard a cenſure, is conſidered elſewhere. For the preſent, let us indulge him in his opinion, and remove the ſcene from the* Heathen *into the* Chriſtian World, *where we meet with ſome examples (too few indeed)*

deed) of every virtue that can adorn human nature, humility, meekneſs, temperance, contempt of the world, devotion, love to God and man. *From the declarations and promiſes of* ſcripture, *we know that ſuch ſhall in no wiſe loſe their reward. But may we not alſo gather the ſame thing from* Reaſon? *Let us put the caſe of a ſoul well aſſured of its own integrity, and actuated by fervent deſires of knowing, loving, reſembling, and enjoying God to the utmoſt degree of its capacity; conſcious as it is of ſuch a ſtrong tendency towards the beſt of beings, in whom it would willingly repoſe itſelf as its only center with the entire weight of all its powers, and with ineffable delight, but cannot do it by reaſon of the contrary attractions, and the innumerable weakneſſes and imperfections, that continually ſurround it, can it forbear thinking with itſelf—"* *Well, and will "* *this wretched inconſiſtent ſtate never end but "* *with my being? Shall I never obtain what I "* *ſeek? Never reſt till I am become incapable "* *of all actions and thought? I will as ſoon be- "* *lieve any thing as this of my Maker, that he "* *will caſt off the ſoul that loves him, and "* *leave his own work unfiniſhed.*

Let us further ſuppoſe of a perſon of this character, that he is as unhappy *as he can well be with a good conſcience and hope in God, like* Lazarus, *poor and friendleſs, and ready to breathe out his ſoul in agonies of pain and diſtreſs; while another, neither beloved of God or man, having*

not

not one good quality to recommend him, wantons in wealth, and sees himself in a station not only superior *to much better men than himself, but which gives him the command over them, and the disposal of the supplies of Providence, which, like a wicked unfaithful steward, he diverts from the necessitous object for whom they were designed, and spends upon his lusts. In such a case, without consulting the* sacred oracles, *or even supposing they had said nothing about the different ends of these men, might we not from the* reason of the thing *be* morally certain *that their ends would be exceeding different? Might we not appeal for this to every man's inward sense of* right *and* wrong, fit *and* unfit, *and to the common notions and ideas of mankind concerning the wisdom and goodness of the Maker and Governor of the world? And would not this way of arguing yeild a distinct sort of evidence from that of* Revelation, *and highly proper to be insisted on in a discourse addressed to* Christians? *There is no need of debating that* previous question—*How men were raised to this divine and heavenly temper—It is enough that there are men in the world of whom the world is not worthy, in whom* Reason *is victorious over* Passion, *and the* spiritual *over the* animal *and* fleshy *part, men who worship but* one God, *and obey and imitate the* God *whom they worship; and the* question *is, if it can be made a question—Whether such a state of Being as these souls are now in can be conceived to be their* final state, *and to*

answer

anſwer the purpoſes of a wiſe God *in forming them at firſt, and afterwards aſſiſting them in the race of virtue, and in their endeavours after perfection? Now had Mr.* Hallett *only conſidered the proofs of* a future ſtate *from* Reaſon *in* this view, *as propoſed and handled by* Chriſtian writers *for the uſe of* Chriſtians *not of* Heathens, *and as turning upon the different characters and circumſtances of perſons known to us, he might, methinks, have let them paſs, out of regard to the ſervice they might be of to pious minds, to entertain, inſtruct, enlarge, and excite them; and for the awakening of others, to whom none of the ways of conviction are unneceſſary; and might have ſpared himſelf a great deal of needleſs pains (to ſay no worſe) which he hath taken to deprive them of all their weight and influence.*

If it be ſaid (as Mr. Hallett *had need ſay, if he be true to his own* principles, *whatever his* practice *be) that theſe arguments ſhould have no place in the diſcourſes of* Chriſtians, *becauſe imperfect obedience (and ſuch is that of the moſt eminent* Chriſtians*) cannot be ſhewn by* Reaſon *to have any title to a reward; and becauſe further, theſe arguments are at beſt but probable, that is, no arguments at all, if there be no medium between mere poſſibility and ſtrict demonſtration; I refer my readers to thoſe* chapters *wherein theſe objections are examined at large. Only becauſe the Author ſeems to be particularly fond of this laſt notion, with which he hopes to do wonders,*

wonders, I would, over and above what is offered in its proper place, entreat him to consider whether the faith of the greateſt part of Chriſtians, *not to ſay of all without diſtinction, being brought to this* teſt, *they will not be in the ſame ſtate of uncertainty about a life to come as the reſt of the world?*

Mr. Hallett *muſt think that there is* ſtrict demonſtration *for the truth of* Chriſtianity. *Be it ſo (as, without doubt, the evidence is abundantly enough to ſatisfy any reaſonable mind) yet few, I believe, will pretend that common* Chriſtians *are maſters of this demonſtration. The reaſons upon which they aſſent may be ſufficient to juſtify them to themſelves, and to others; but will he ſay, they are ſtrictly demonſtrative? How then comes their faith to be capable of degrees? I proceed; no man can have more certainty for the truth of any propoſition upon the authority of* Revelation, *than he hath of the truth of the* Revelation *itſelf; and, therefore, not being able to produce demonſtration for the whole together, cannot have it for any particular part. He may be certain that ſuch a doctrine (as for inſtance, that* there is a future ſtate of happineſs for pious ſouls) *is a branch of the* Chriſtian Religion; *but that the doctrine is therefore* true, *he hath, and can have, no greater aſſurance than he hath of the truth of that* Religion, *on the teſtimony of which he receives it. So that, for ought I ſee, if this writer's notion be admitted,* Chriſtians *are in*

no

no better condition, as to their belief of a future ſtate *than* Heathens. *They may have higher degrees of probability for the ſame thing, but as long as there is any difference between the higheſt degrees of* probability *and* ſtrict demonſtration, *they are equally without any* juſt foundation *for their faith.*

In the ſixth chapter *I have conſidered the diſtinct influence which* Tradition *and* Reaſon *have had on the belief of* a future ſtate, *and endeavoured very briefly to ſhew, that tho' this and many other notions, be firſt received from* Tradition, *as they unavoidably muſt, yet that they are never the leſs capable of being proved by* Reaſon. *I am ſo well perſuaded of this, and the neceſſity of giving to each of theſe its due, that I muſt beg pardon of an ingenious Author, to whom the world is much indebted for a late valuable performance, if I think he hath not* expreſſed *himſelf with all the caution he ought to have done in a matter of ſuch importance, for I would hope the fault is only in the expreſſion. His words are,* " *If we look over all the Phi-* " *loſophers, and conſider what the treaſures of* " *knowledge were, which they had among them,* " *we ſhall find that there were many beams of* " *true light ſhining amidſt their dark and con-* " *fuſed notions; but this light was never de-* " *rived from any uſe of their* Reaſon, *for they* " *never* could *give any reaſonable account of* " *it.* The inviſible things of God *had been* " *ſome way or other related to them, and as*

long

" *long as they were contented to tranſmit to po-*
" *ſterity what their anceſtors had tranſmitted*
" *to them, ſo long they preſerved a conſiderable*
" *number of truths; but whenever they at-*
" *tempted to give* reaſons *for theſe opinions*
" (i. e. *Truths*) *then in a little time they bewil-*
" *dered themſelves, under a notion of advancing*
" *their ſcience; then they ceaſed to retain the*
" *truth in their knowledge, changed the true*
" *painciples of things, which had been delivered*
" *to them, into a falſe, weak, and inconſiſtent*
" *ſcheme of ill-grounded Philoſophy*. If the*
meaning of theſe words were that which firſt
offers itſelf, that the knowledge which the Ancients *had of God and divine things was* wholly traditional (*tho', by the way, it could not in that caſe be very properly called* knowledge) *and that mens reaſoning upon that* Tradition *was their fault, and the firſt occaſion of all the innovations in natural Religion; I ſhould freely declare my opinion that the Author had attributed abundantly too much to* Tradition, *and advanced a notion of the moſt dangerous conſequence, were it univerſally purſued. The error of thoſe, in the firſt ages of the world, was not endeavouring to give a* reaſonable account *of the* inviſible things of God, *which the* inſpired writer *himſelf ſaith* are from the creation of the world clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made; *but their not being contented*

* *Shuckford's* ſacred and profane hiſtory of the world connected. *Pref.*

with

with the conciſeneſs *and* ſimplicity *of the primitive creed, and with employing their* Reaſon *in ſhewing the truth and beauty, and extenſive influence of it. This made them* ſeek out many inventions, *which, tho' only the viſions of a fertile imagination, they looked upon as improvements on the old ſcheme, and laboured to ſupport by fallacious reaſonings. If any* Tradition, merely as Tradition, *muſt be blindly ſubmitted to, then all* Tradition *is to be ſo. And thus* error, *when it is become* traditional, *will have all the authority of* truth, *or rather,* truth *and* error *will be the ſame thing. The extreme, which mankind have moſt commonly run into, is that of reſting* in Tradition *(or in the religious tenets and opinions delivered to them by their Fathers) without uſing their* underſtanding *to examine any part of it, by which means* truth *and* falſhood *have been, partly with deſign, and partly without it, partly by the politicks of men, and partly by the influence of fancy, luſt, and paſſion, mixed and jumbled together, and ſo have paſſed down undiſtinguiſhed thro' following ages. The ſtream of* unwritten Tradition *will naturally grow foul and muddied in a long courſe of time, if men do not keep it pure by a ſober uſe of their* Reaſon. *It is* Reaſon *therefore that muſt prevent the corruption of* Tradition, *or, after the corruption is begun, hinder its increaſing, and, if it be poſſible, reduce* Tradition *to the ſtate it was in at its firſt parting from the fountain.*

The

The ſubject of this Book hath been ſo well and largely treated by the ableſt Writers, ſuch as Mr. Howe, *Dr.* Clarke, *Mr.* Woolaſton, *Author of the* Moral Proof, *&c. that I ſhould have been under little temptation to trouble the world with any thoughts of mine upon it, if Mr.* Hallett *had not ſtruck at the foundation of all their reaſonings; and even now, my averſion to* controverſy *is ſuch, that I ſhould not have meddled in this, if I had not apprehended it to be of the greateſt importance, and that the objections brought by that Author would admit of an eaſy and ſatisfactory anſwer. Whether mine be ſo, muſt be ſubmitted to the judgment of the Publick.*

SOME

THOUGHTS

Concerning the

Proofs of a FUTURE STATE

FROM

REASON.

CHAP. I.

Not natural *for one that* reaſons *and* conſiders things, *to conclude, from what he ſees befal the* body *when it dies, that the* man *is no more.*

SECT. I. WHEN a man dies, there's an utter end of his exiſtence, as far as the information of *Senſe* reaches. But what if it ſhould appear, that *Senſe* hath nothing at all to ſay about the exiſtence of any ſuch Being as man? What if the *living* man be as much hidden from *Senſe*, as any *future* life of his beyond the grave? My idea of a

man is, of *a reaſonable Being, acting by a body.* The body of a man, like any other portion of matter falls under the notice of the *Senſes*; but *Reaſon*, which makes his diſtinctive character, is the object only of *Reaſon.* Among the brutal kind, thoſe which ſee the faces of men every day, and are familiarly acquainted with their voices, have no more notion of an *intelligent Being*, than the wild beaſts of the foreſt, that live moſt remote from the dwellings of men. All the knowledge which the domeſtick animal hath of his maſter, and the reſt of the family, is reduced to certain *figures*, and *motions* and *ſounds.* And, in this reſpect, the *Senſes* of mankind have no privilege above thoſe of brutes. One man can no more *immediately* ſee, or hear, the wiſdom and virtue of another man, than his dog can; or than he can hear colours, and ſee ſounds.

SECT. II. Well then; ſince it is not *Senſe*, but *Reaſon*, that informs us of the exiſtence of any man, *as a thinking Being*, *Reaſon* only, and not *Senſe*, is to determine when the man ceaſes to exiſt. It is true, our knowledge of things, which are not the immediate objects of *Senſe*, is founded in it; ſo that if *A* had not eyes and ears, he would never know that *B* hath underſtanding and liberty of choice; there being no other way of diſcovering this, as we are at preſent framed, but by external ſigns. But then, as we do not imagine theſe

ſigns

ſigns (e. g. words written or ſpoken) have any reſemblance to the ideas conveyed by them, or the leaſt *natural* connexion with them, ſo we have as little reaſon to confound the body, by the members and organs, of which theſe ſigns are made, with that conſcious intelligent principle, which orders theſe ſigns, and appoints what their preciſe meaning and value ſhall be.

The word *Elephant*, as we find it delineated upon paper, conſiſts of a certain number of letters, which, having no likelineſs, in the figure of them, to the creature called by that name, cannot, any otherwiſe than as the effect of cuſtom and agreement, excite the idea of of it in our minds. Let us lay aſide our prejudices, and we ſhall find that *matter* and *motion*, in which two all the properties of a human body are ſummed up, have no more ſimilitude, or affinity, with thoſe operations of the mind, by which they are directed and influenced, than the letters found in the word *Elephant* have with the idea of that animal, and therefore may be, and very likely are, of a nature entirely diſtinct from them. This being ſo, not the leaſt ſhadow of an argument can be drawn from the appearances, when a man dies, for the mortality of the ſoul, or thinking principle. All that appears is, that this thinking principle acts not by the body, as it did before. But ſince, before this, the thinking principle was not known to be a *part*

of the body, but only to actuate and command it, what ſhould make us believe, when it no longer acts upon the body, that it ceaſes to live, and act at all? It is plain, indeed, the members of the body are without all motion, and the *Senſes* incapable of their uſual functions. But did the body move and govern itſelf, while living? Or did the *Senſes* reaſon on their ſeveral objects? Or rather, was it not a principle diſtinct from the body that did all this? And, if diſtinct, why muſt its fate be concluded by that of the body? I hear an organ finely played on, and admire the ſkill of the maſter, who readily ſtrikes out any tune that is called for. After a while, the machine becomes unfit for uſe, or is taken to pieces; whereupon, the muſick is ſpoiled, or heard no more. The muſician was not ſeen by me when he played; perhaps, I never ſaw him. Am I therefore to infer, that the inſtrument made its own harmony? Or that the muſician loſt his ſkill, as often as, the inſtrument not being in tune, he could not make it ſound agreeably, and lives no longer, now that is deſtroyed? Whatever difference there is between the relation of a muſician to the organ, and of the ſoul to the body, the caſes are ſo far parallel, that the ſoul is as diſtinct from the body, for ought appears from the firſt view of the properties of the one and the other, as the organiſt is from the organ, though, by the wiſe appointment

of

of the Creator, for a time more dependent.

SECT. III. I confeſs, this is reaſoning after a different manner from a late Writer*, whoſe words are theſe. " Let the reader " diveſt himſelf for a moment of all the " thoughts he hath received from *Scripture* " and *Tradition*, and then view the human " nature, and ſee what his mere *Reaſon* can " learn from it. I ſee a man move, and hear " him ſpeak for ſome years; from his ſpeech, " I certainly infer he thinks as I do. I ſee " then that man is a Being, who thinks and " acts. After ſome time, the man falls down " in my ſight, grows cold and ſtiff, he ſpeaks " and acts no more. Is it not then natural to " conclude that he thinks no more?" My anſwer is---If we keep to the teſtimony of *Senſe*, that tells us that the body is dead. But, further than this, *this Deponent* ſaith not; it neither affirms or denies any thing of that inward, conſcious principle, which moved the body, becauſe it knows and apprehends nothing at all about it. If we go further, and will needs *give our judgment* on the preſent occurrence, we may be ready to infer the ceſſation of *thought* from the ceſſation of *bodily motion*, as *this Gentleman* does. But, for certain, this would be a raſh judgment, becauſe the ideas of *thought* and *mo-*

* Mr. *Hallett*, in his Diſcourſe of the impoſſibility of proving a Future State by the light of nature.

tion being entirely foreign, and the motions of the body being directed and over-ruled by the thoughts of the mind, it is very poſſible that theſe thoughts and motions may not exiſt in the ſame ſubject, nor in ſubjects that have a neceſſary dependence upon one another; in which caſe, the deſtruction of *one* will not infer the deſtruction of *both*. The leaſt therefore that *Reaſon* obliges us to in this circumſtance, is to *ſuſpend our judgment* till we have ſome further evidence of the *fameneſs* of the ſubject of thought, and corporeal motion, or of their *neceſſary and total dependence* upon each other: and if, before they have any evidence for this, it be natural for ſome men not barely to have *unaccountable fears*, not founded in *Reaſon*, but condemned by it; but likewiſe to *conclude* that a man thinks no more, becauſe his body moves no more, this will only prove that it is natural for ſome men to be too haſty in their concluſions; which I will agree with Mr. *Hallett* is no uncommon thing, and, if he pleaſes, will allow him to be an inſtance of it.

SECT. IV. How much more is there of good ſenſe, and manly reaſon, as well as ſpirit and elevation, in the dying words of *Cyrus!* When addreſſing himſelf to his children, he thus ſpeaks— "Think not, O my "ſons, that when I have finiſhed this mortal "life, I am nothing at all; for, during the "the time that I have been with you, you

"never

" never saw my soul, but only knew it to exist
" from its actions and operations. For my
" part, it always appeared to me a most incre-
" dible thing, that the soul should live as
" long as it continues in a mortal body, but,
" as soon as it removes out of it, should die,
" when this mortal body hath no life, but
" what it derives from the presence of the soul.
" Nay, I cannot but regard it, as a most ab-
" surd imagination, that the soul thinks less
" regularly and wisely, when it is separated
" from this unthinking body. Rather, since
" the soul, being disengaged from the body,
" will be a pure defecated mind, it is most
" agreeable to *Reason*, that it should then ar-
" rive to a greater perfection of wisdom.
" When the human frame is dissolved, every
" part of man is *seen* to return to its original
" element, except his *soul*, which is *invisible*,
" both when present in the body, and at its
" departure out of it*.

CHAP. II.

Of probable *arguments, and their* use *in the present Question.*

SECT. I. SO far then all looks fair and promising on their side, who believe a state of existence after this, without taking in the assistance of *Revelation*. The next

* *Xenophon*'s Κυρε παιδεια.

next ſtep would be to inquire, whether men have not evidence enough, from the *light of nature*, to juſtify their belief in this particular. But, becauſe there is an objection thrown in our way, that affects the ſtrongeſt arguments, which are not ſtrictly demonſtrative, I would make a little ſtop, to examine if it be ſo formidable as it is repreſented. The objection, deemed unanſwerable by the Gentleman that urges it, is this--- " That when we " are treating about God's actions, there can " be no ſuch thing in nature as a *probable* " *argument*. In this caſe, there is no me- " dium between ſtrict demonſtration and " mere poſſibility; —becauſe, in order to " our knowing the probability of the event, " it is neceſſary that we ſhould know all the " reaſons that might be offered, on both ſides, " for God's doing or neglecting to do what " men think it is likely he will do.—While " we do not, and cannot know all the reaſons " on both ſides, we cannot ſay on which ſide " the *real* probability is." I hope this notion is not right; for, in truth, if it be, and we are under a neceſſity of giving up all the *moral evidence* for a life to come, which hath been always eſteemed ſo couvincing, I fear there are many other things muſt follow after, and that we ſhall find it difficult to ſtop ſhort of a ſtate of univerſal ſcepticiſm in Religion. I have the following Remarks to offer, in order to clear this matter.

SECT.

SECT. II. *With regard to the Divine Actions, the terms* probable *and* possible *are merely relative to our understandings.* It is not *probable*, but *certain*, that God will do what is *best* to be done, and what he *foreknows* he shall do, because he cannot be ignorant of what is *best*, or under any bias to the contrary; nor can he be liable to change. What God will not do, because unfit to be done, it is not so much as *eventually* possible, much less probable, he should do. *Real probabilities* then, as distinguished from those that appear so to fallible and finite understanding, there are none, neither *possibilities*. If this destroy the *probability* that there may be reasons against our opinion, (for ought we know) which we know nothing of, stronger than the reasons we have for it, it will equally destroy the *possibility* too; since what we call *possible* is only so, for any reason we see to make us judge it *impossible*: but there may be reasons, for ought we can say, which, if we knew them, would be owned to prove *that* cannot possibly be, because not fit, and not foreknown, to be, which we ignorantly think *may* be. What then, are we to understand by *real probability* and *possibility*? Supposing we were so fortunate as to discover a great many of those *innumerable* hidden reasons, which *our Author* is so fond of, even this would not do; we should not yet be able to judge *on which side the greater weight of Reason lies*, being unacquainted with those reasons that are still behind.

hind. We muſt, therefore, have *all* the reaſons in nature, both *pro* and *con*, and be ſure we are qualified to weigh them one againſt the other, or we had as good have *none*. But, if we have all, and are capable of determining their reſpective force and value, it is no longer *probability*, but *certainty*. The reſult is, that *probability* and *poſſibility*, with regard to what is wiſeſt and beſt for God to do, are merely relative to created underſtandings; and that, therefore, if it be abſurd to deny us the liberty of calling that *poſſible*, which is ſo *to us*, or for any thing we know to the contrary, it is equally abſurd and unreaſonable not to allow men to ſtyle that *probable*, which, to them, appears ſo in the higheſt degree, after all the inquiries which, as ſincere lovers of truth, they can be obliged to make.

SECT. III. *According to the common ſenſe of mankind, that is the probable ſide of the queſtion, for the truth of which there is evidence ſufficient to engage the aſſent of any rational, and unprejudiced inquirer.* It is not what appears ſo to an odd-faſhioned and wry underſtanding; to a man under the influence of pride, and paſſion; or to a few men, whom caprice, intereſt, or ſome favourite hypotheſis, lead to think differently from the reſt of the world, when the reſolution of the queſtion is of equal concernment to all mankind. Mr. *Hallett* is but one of many millions who have an intereſt in the debate about a Future Sate; which,

which, for that reaſon, cannot be ſuppoſed to to turn upon *nice ſpeculations*, which he, and a few other ſuch penetrating heads, may happen to ſtart; as, for inſtance, that *in reaſoning about a Future State, there is no medium between ſtrict demonſtration, and mere poſſibility.* Is there one of a thouſand, capable of underſtanding ſuch refined *Metaphyſicks?* And of what uſe can that be in deciding a queſtion of univerſal importance, which one man in a thouſand cannot apprehend? So that for ought I perceive, Mr. *Hallett* muſt be content to let the torrent drive, notwithſtanding all he hath done to ſtop it with his hand. After all he hath done, or *can do*, the ignorant multitude, whoſe ſouls, however, are of the ſame worth as his; and among the thinking part of mankind, (ſome of whom may be allowed to ſee as far as he) much the greateſt number, will think it reaſonable to have ſome regard to *probabilities*; eſpecially, when the *probabilities* are ſuch as naturally do produce the ſame ſatisfaction of mind, or almoſt the ſame, that *ſtrict demonſtration* could do. Which is the caſe in the argument before us. For, here, all the appearances in the *moral world* are for a Future State; none againſt it. Here we find arguments ſuited to every ſize of underſtanding; here the ſubject hath a light attending it like that of the ſun, which is viſible to all the earth; here the firſt glances of our minds, our ſimpleſt and moſt natural notions,

are

are but more and more confirmed by laboured reaſoning, and the moſt free and large inquiries. The more a man examines, the ſtronger doth the argument grow upon him. Let him make a perpetual progreſs in the improvment of his faculties, brightning his underſtanding, and purifying and exalting his affections; as he is more inclined to *wiſh* there may be a more perfect ſtate of things to come, ſo he *ſees* more reaſon to *believe* it. This laudable, and delightful progreſs of the mind towards perfection, is, among others, a very good proof of what he *wiſhes* may be true. But, "*does not a Judge act wrong to determine in* "*favour of the Plaintiff, till he knows what* "*the Defendant hath to ſay? When he hath* "*heard both ſides, or when he hath reaſon to* "*to think he knows the chief things that may* "*be pleaded on the ſide of the Defendant, he may* "*make a probable judgment; which he could* "*not do before.*" Let us follow this compariſon, and ſee againſt whom it will conclude. The *Plaintiffs*, in the preſent debate, are the *body of mankind*, who have been always in poſſeſſion of this important article, of *a life to come*, and the ground of their complaint is, that ſome men, from an unhappy temper, which makes them take a pleaſure in diſturbing their neighbours, do moſt unreaſonably diſpute their title, and endeavour to rob them of what many among them value more than life itſelf; tho', in the mean while, even victory,

tory, could they gain it, would be to their own unſpeakable loſs, if they are honeſt men. However, as little as they deſerve it, the *Defendants* have been heard, and allowed to produce their *ſtrong reaſons*, which, on trial, have been found to be exceeding weak, or none. Upon which one might have hoped the controverſy ſhould have droped, and the world been left in the peaceable enjoyment of its *old opinion*. But the *Defendants* are not ſo eaſily ſilenced. They ſeem ſenſible, that if judgment be given on the evidence that appears, the cauſe muſt go againſt them. In bar to this, their next plea is (and it is a moſt extraordinary one) that how weak ſoever all their allegations are, *it is poſſible* there are other things to be offered, of greater weight, were they but ſo happy to know them; and, therefore, till it can be proved there are no ſuch *latent* reaſons, the Judge will only ſhew his partiality in deciding for the *Plaintiff*. I fancy, at this rate of proceeding, we ſhould have but few trials ended in any of our Courts; thoſe cauſes, in which the litigants are apteſt to complain of delays, muſt hang in everlaſting ſuſpenſe, unleſs an *infallible Judge*, one infallible in *matters of fact* (for in *articles of faith*, we are told of one at *Rome*) be ſent to try and determine them.

SECT. IV. *On the ſame principle, there can be no ſuch thing as moral prudence*; the objects of which are not things *neceſſary*, as of *Science*,

Science, but *contingent* things, which may fall out one way or other, according to the powers and operations of natural causes, under the Providence of God controlling, or permitting, directing, or over-ruling them; of which actions of God we have nothing to say that comes up to strict demonstration. And yet the value of these contingencies, as in games of chance, is capable of an exact calculation. "So it is in *Agriculture*, *Merchandising*, and "in almost all those things about which the "industry of men is imployed. In all these "the probabillity of the event hath its deter-"minate value; which, (as an excellent Au-"thor * hath well observed) is the natural re-"ward of the more prudent choice. It may "so happen, (saith he) that the man who lays "an equal wager, that his first cast, with a "couple of Dice, shall be two sixes, wins "the stake. Nevertheless, it is demonstrable "from the nature, or cubical figure of a Die, "that there are thirty-five cases, in which this "will not fall out, to one in which it will; "and that, consequently, the expectation of "the one is proportionably more valuable "than the others." Let us apply this to the present Question; and we shall find, upon viewing the nature of things, and weighing the reasons for God's appointing us to a Future State, that it is not barely *thirty-five*, but *many thousands* to *one* odds that the *affirmative* side

of

* *Cumberland* de Legib. Nat.

of the queſtion proves true. Nor will the *poſſible* reaſons for the contrary alter the caſe, becauſe we are to govern our *belief*, and *practice*, by what appears, and not by what does not; and where there is no juſt ground to ſuppoſe ſuch *inviſible* reaſons, they ought not to be ſuppoſed. I advance further, and affirm that,

SECT. V. *It is the will of God that mankind ſhould yield their aſſent to theſe numerous, and ſtrong probabilities of a Future State, which are ſuggeſted by the frame of our own nature, and by the natures and events of things without us; and that they ſhould form their conduct upon them.* The will of God in this matter is not difficult to be diſcovered. We might gather it from the *analogy* of *civil* and *moral* prudence with that which is *divine*; of which if the former be commendable, in ſuiting itſelf to *probabilities*, much more muſt the latter be ſo, and as much our *duty*, as it is our *praiſe*. But I argue further. It is not *nature*, but the *God of nature*, that hath formed the underſtandings of men, and limited their capacities for knowledge: it is not *chance*, but *Providence*, that hath placed us in the preſent circumſtances of our being; ſo that if a thing appears highly *probable* to our underſtandings, not in one, but in every ſituation; not to one or two perſons, but to the bulk of mankind; not to the vain, the ſenſual, the proud, the careleſs, but to the moſt ſober, and inquiſi-

tive; we muſt ſay, that, in ordering the ſcene, as he hath done, our Maker deſigned the thing ſhould appear, in the manner it does; for he knew, it would naturally appear thus, and that its doing ſo would be no fault of ours. He would, therefore, have prevented this *deluſive appearance*, or, to ſpeak more properly, he would not have been the *author* of it, if he had not appoved it. But if he appoved the things appearing *probable*, *highly probable*, *infinitely more probable*, than the contrary, he intended that men ſhould believe the truth of what appears thus *probable*. He could not expect they ſhould *ſuſpend their judgment*, and believe nothing at all about it, for no other reaſon, but becauſe they have not *ſtrict demonſtration* for it; for this he knew to be *morally* impoſſible, that creatures framed, and ſituated, as we are, violently inclined to aſſent upon the moſt inſufficient evidence, and of whom not one of a thouſand knows what *demonſtration* means, and when he is in poſſeſſion of it, ſhould with-hold our aſſent from Propoſitions that carry the greateſt evidence of their truth, excepting what is *demonſtrative*. If we muſt never aſſent, unleſs we have *demonſtration*, by far the greateſt part of mankind, muſt never aſſent to any but ſelf-evident Propoſitions; being, as to all others, incapable of judging when they are fairly demonſtrated. So that, if men believe

lieve at all, (which is unavoidable) they must believe upon *probable* evidence; and if in other things, in this much more; where the probability is so great, and the issue so momentous. The decision of this question—Whether there be, or be not, a Future State—will make a vast alteration in the state of mankind, so vast, that even a *Priori*, or from the bare consideration of the wisdom and goodness of God, we might be sure he would not leave them at an absolute uncertainty about it, as indeed he hath not. The same arguments that evince the Being, and Providence of God, will many of them help to convince us of a Future State; we are naturally led from one to the other. If it be said, *no*; these arguments when applied to a Future State are only *probable*, and *probable* arguments are no arguments at all; still I say, if this be so, we are not at an absolute uncertainty, or *in perfect doubt, it may be, or may not be*, but certain that it *will not be*; for no evidence *for* a Future State, is evidence *against* it. A life to come being supposed, the present life must have the relation to it of a state of trial to a state of recompences; the knowledge of which relation of our present to a future existence, would be of excellent use in God's government of the world, as a most powerful motive to persuade men to the practice of universal vir-

tue, and to reſtrain them from vice and immorality; of which more will be ſaid in another place. Why then have we no ſuch information communicated to us? Why are we left entirely in the dark about it? This utter ſilence of *Reaſon*, this *negative argument*, (if it could be ſuppoſed) in a thing which it is of ſo much importance both to the honour of God's law, and the happineſs of mankind, that we ſhould be made acquainted with, would warrant us to ſet our hearts at reſt, that there is no ſuch thing. It cannot, therefore, be ſuppoſed that *Reaſon* is thus ſilent, that there is any ſuch *negative argument* againſt a future exiſtence; nor can it be the will of God that we ſhould throw away all the *moral* evidence which he hath given us of a life after this; but, on the contrary, that we ſhould hold it faſt, and make the right uſe of it, to encourage ourſelves in the practice of every thing that is virtuous and laudable, perfective of our nature, and conducive to our final felicity; and to avoid whatever hath an oppoſite influence, and tendency. I obſerve once more,

SECT. VI. *Evidence, not ſtrictly demonſtrative in itſelf, or directly, may become demonſtrative by the circumſtances attending it.* As, for inſtance, when it can be proved impoſſible that a thing ſhould have all the likelihood of being true and real, if it be not

not ſo. It is in this *indirect* manner, that we prove the exiſtence of an *external material* world; and in this manner only can it be done. For why may not the whole be a mockery and deluſion? It may be ſo, if we conſider only the ideas and ſenſations that are raiſed in our minds by outward objects; ſince all the ſame ideas and ſenſations may be produced by the immediate power of God, without the intervention of a boby, or the exiſtence of a corporeal univerſe. And were we entertained with ſuch an *empty viſion*, we ſhould have no way to diſtinguiſh it from that we are now preſented with. But then, becauſe ſuch a proceeding is not to be reconciled with our ideas of the divine *majeſty*, *wiſdom*, and *ſincerity*, we are very well ſatisfied, there is a world without us, of the ſame vaſt extent, and adorned with all the beauty, proportion and variety, it hath in our ideas; and even far beyond what they can expreſs. We can argue after the ſame manner here, but with much greater advantage. And, I hope, if we had but *equal* evidence for a world to come that we have for the preſent, it would be enough to content any reaſonable man; much more, when the former exceeds the latter. I would only obſerve, by the way, what an odd circumſtance we are in, betwixt thoſe that ſay there is no ſuch thing as matter, and others that are as poſitive there

can be no ſpiritual ſubſtance; between thoſe who deny we have any proof of the preſent viſible world, and thoſe who would perſuade us we have none of any other world that is inviſible and future. At this rate, we have nothing elſe to do but ſit down, and either laugh, or weep, or ſtare, at the *vain ſhew*, according as the diverſity of our conſtitutions ſhall make our *ſpleen* operate. This by the by. I now proceed,

We can demonſtrate it to be repugnant to the *wiſdom*, *ſincerity*, and *goodneſs*, of God, to delude his creatures with the belief and hope of a ſtate of things which will never be. When we conſider, that the voice of *Reaſon*, is the voice of God, that our Creator is, in this affair, himſelf our inſtructor, and hath taught us what we are to believe; that our expectation of what *will be* hath its foundation in what *is*; that whether we take a view of human *nature*, or of human *life*, look within, or without us, examine the witneſſes together or apart, ſtill the uniform, invariable, verdict is, *that the preſent is not man's only life:* when we conſider that the premiſes are put into our hands by God himſelf, and we only draw the concluſion, and that the concluſion we draw from them is perfectly agreeable to the divine will; when we conſider all this, we may as well ſuppoſe, we are wholly deceived

ceived in our ideas of the *moral attributes* of God, as that we may be deceived here. For if we have any notion of theſe attributes that we can depend on, if we can argue from them in eſtabliſhing the truth of the *Chriſtian Revelation*, and fixing the ſenſe of it, we go upon the ſame ſure ground, when from them we deduce the certainty of a Future State. Where is the mighty difference, whether a prediction, or promiſe, be contained in *words*, or in the *frame of our beings*, and the ſtate and circumſtances of the world? When God hath given us ſuch a nature, governs the world after ſuch a manner, and makes it natural, and almoſt unavoidable, to paſs ſuch a judgment on things, that it is manifeſt his *deſign* was, we ſhould believe a certain thing *will be*; is not this equivalent to a prediction, or promiſe, of that thing? I mean, as to the *certainty of the event*; foraſmuch as God can no more deſignedly draw men into a wrong belief, and feed them with groundleſs hopes, by ſuch *appearances of things* as may poſſibly have another meaning than we affix to them, but which he intended we ſhould underſtand as we do, than he can do it by *words*, which have only one preciſe, determinate, ſignification. The diſappointing of ſuch hopes, which are properly of his own raiſing, is as contrary to the notion of *goodneſs*, as defeating thoſe which he en-

courages by his *written word*; and his *wisdom* and *greatneſs* will no more allow he ſhould keep up his authority by the *imaginary* hopes and terrors of *nature*, than that he ſhould do it by *falſe* hopes and fears, founded in a *ſupernatural Revelation*. In both caſes, the thing is much the ſame; both with regard to God and man. God in both caſes is loved and feared, obeyed and worſhiped; and poor man amuſed, flattered, or awed, for the little time he lives; after which, being returned to his nothing, he will neither regret the loſs of his hopes, together with his Being, nor be able to reproach his Maker for having deceived him with them. But whether this would be any inducement to the ever-bleſſed God to make uſe of ſuch an impoſture, I ſhall leave to the judgment of thoſe, who think, in the leaſt, honourably of their Maker.

I conclude from the whole, that we are ſo far from having any juſt grounds to ſuppoſe that there may be reaſons unknown to us, for God's acting in this caſe, quite contrary to what he hath given us Reaſon to think he will do, that according to all our notions of his moral perfections, it is certain there can be no ſuch reaſons.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The argument for a Future State *from the* natural immortality *of the Soul.*

SECT. I. I Shall now ſet before my Reader a few of thoſe many arguments, which *univerſal Reaſon*, if we are diſpoſed to liſten to her inſtructions, will ſupply us with, of a life to come. And I begin with that which ariſes from the *natural* immortality of the human ſoul. The ſoul is not *naturally* mortal, like the body; therefore, continues to live, when the body dies. Before I enter upon the argument, I would make a few previous obſervations.

SECT. II. *Incorruptibility expreſſes not the whole idea of immortality.* I take notice of this, becauſe theſe two things are generally confounded. * "*Nihil eſt in animis admiſ-*
"*tum, nihil concretum, nihil copulatum,*
"*nihil coagmentatum, nihil duplex; quod*
"*cum ita ſit, certe nec ſecerni, nec dividi,*
"*nec diſcerpi, nec diſtrahi poteſt, nec inter-*
"*ire igitur. Eſt enim interitus quaſi diſ-*
"*ceſſus, & ſecretio, ac direptus earum par-*
"*tium quæ ante interitum junctione aliqua*
"*tenebantur.*" I chuſe to give this paſſage untranſlated, becauſe it is difficult to hit upon

* *Cicero*'s Tuſc. Qu. l. 1.

upon ſuch a number of words in *Engliſh*, expreſſing very near the ſame idea, which we can be ſure do exactly anſwer to thoſe in the original. The general meaning is plainly this—That the ſoul, being in its nature one ſimple uncompounded thing, cannot be divided; nor conſequently periſh; *periſhing* being nothing elſe but the ſeparation of thoſe parts, which, before, were ſome way or other held together. *Immortality is an endleſs progreſſion, or continuance, in life.* But now, what never had life may be incorruptible; as a point of matter that is without *parts*, or, if that cannot be, without all *pores*, ſo as to be in no danger of a diſſolution. Or that which once enjoyed life, may, for what appears at *firſt view*, loſe it again, the ſubſtance remaining ſafe and uncorrupted. *Incorruptibility* in a living ſubſtance is indeed a good ſtep towards the proof of its *immortality*, but ſtill is no more than a *ſtep*.

SECT. III. *When we ſpeak of the life of a ſpiritual Being, we underſtand conſcious life*; which, indeed, is the only proper life; every thing elſe, that goes by that name, being no more than an imitation, or ſhadow of it. Activity is eſſential to the notion of life; but an active principle can never be lodged, where there is not perception. Vegetables ſeem to have a principle of life ſhut up in their ſeveral roots and

and ſeeds, which being ſoftened and nouriſhed by the moiſture of the earth, and impregnated by the warmth of the ſun, puts itſelf forth in leaves and bloſſoms, in flowers and fruit. But, then, they only ſeem to have this principle in themſelves; the motion of their parts being entirely communicated from without. I believe, therefore, it is a point agreed, that the life of the ſoul conſiſts in *thinking*; either the *faculty*, or the *act*; the latter of which is *actual* life, or what may moſt truly be called *living*; the other *radical* life; being a kind of medium between *death*, or the utter deſtruction of the vital, conſcious, principle, and *actual life*, or life exerted. For as a ſpirit void of all thought cannot very properly be ſaid *actually to live*, ſince ſo to live is to act; ſo on ſuppoſition there be a *latent* principle or power ſtill left, which, as ſoon as all reſtraints are taken off, and it is put into a right ſituation, will diſcover itſelf, and break out into act, that ſubſtance muſt as improperly be ſaid *to be dead*; having always an active power; and becauſe, if abſolutely dead, it could never *naturally*, and of itſelf, return to life again.

SECT IV. *In the language of philoſophy, there is a difference between death, and annihilation.* Annihilation is the extinction of the ſubſtance; death the privation of a quality

quality or attribute, the ſubſtance remaining untouched. God by his almighty power is, without diſpute, able to annihilate all created beings; but ſuppoſing any of theſe created beings to be eſſentially endued with life, he cannot kill them in the ſenſe now explained; that is, he cannot deſtroy their life, without deſtroying at the ſame time, their entire ſubſtance, or being.

SECT. V. *By the natural immortality of the ſoul is meant no more than this, that the nature of the ſoul is ſuch, ſo peculiar, and eminently diſtinguiſhed, that it will continue in life notwithſtanding all the jars and encounters of ſecond cauſes.*

Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient (or rather *non ferient*)
ruinæ.

Be it granted that God can diveſt the ſoul of *actual cogitation*, which I believe, and even of its *power of thinking*, which is more than I can at preſent apprehend; yet will the ſoul, notwithſtanding this, be *naturally* immortal; ſince no finite agent, not the whole force of finite beings confederated, can do either. It is provided with a defence in its own nature againſt their moſt violent attacks. But, ſaith a *Writer*, with whom

whom I have had occaſion to ſpeak before, " I cannot well underſtand what men mean " by the natural immortality of the ſoul. " Every being which God hath made de- " pends upon the will of God for its conti- " nuance in being." Becauſe this is ſo exceeding difficult to be underſtood, let him try what he can do in a more familiar inſtance, and aſk himſelf, why *marble* is eſteemed naturally more laſting than common ſtone, and *therefore*, as well as becauſe it makes a better ſhew, choſen for monuments, and other works of art, that are deſigned to continue for ages? I am apt to think, it is not from a notion that *marble* depends leſs upon the *will of God* than other ſtone; but becauſe it is not ſo ſubject to the ſtrokes of *time*. And can he not conceive that for the ſame reaſon as ſome *bodies* are naturally *laſting*, *ſpiritual ſubſtances* may be naturally *everlaſting*, being in no more danger of periſhing by any created force, to eternity, than *marble*, or any other the moſt ſolid piece of matter, is of being crumbled to duſt, by common accidents, in a moment? In ſhort, had he attended a little to the common diſtinction of immortality into *natural* and *neceſſary*, he needed not have made a difficulty where he found none. That Being is *neceſſarily* immortal, whoſe life is unoriginated, and independent; and, in this ſenſe, God only

hath

hath immortality. A *natural* immortality, ſignifying ſuch a life as is derived immediately and entirely from God, and depends on him only, is the privilege both of angels and the ſouls of men.

SECT. VI. The argument now follows. The ſoul is *naturally* immortal, therefore *actually* ſo. That the ſoul is *naturally* immortal may be ſhewn in few words, taking for granted what is proved in another place*, that it is eſſentially indiviſible. For whatever is indiviſible cannot receive any alteration in it's properties from finite cauſes; but, as it muſt remain the ſame individual ſubſtance, all created power notwithſtanding, ſo, if ſuppoſed to be thinking, it muſt continue the ſame individual thinking ſubſtance as ever. Among the innumerable changes produced in the world about us by the colliſion of bodies, it is plain there is not one but is made by a change in the ſubſtances themſelves, which by having their parts ſundered, or differently arranged, put on new qualities. And, according to our conception, it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe with regard to immaterial beings. But now that any ſuch change ſhould befal an indiſcerpible ſubſtance as would imply a change in its powers, unleſs made by omnipotence itſelf, is to our thoughts incomprehenſible.

* Eſſay towards a Demonſtration of the Soul's Immateriality.

prehenſible. Nay, ſuppoſing the thinking faculty to be eſſential, as I am ready to imagine hath been made out to a high degree of probability*, the ſoul, being one, muſt *neceſſarily*, if it exiſt at all, continue one thinking ſubſtance to eternity. The ſoul therefore is *naturally* immortal. And if *naturally* immortal, *actually* ſo, is the ſequel of the argument.

SECT. VII. The nature of the ſoul affords a fair preſumption of its being deſigned to continue for ever in being. God hath fitted it for an endleſs life, and therefore intended it for ſuch a life. How is it we come to the knowledge of the final cauſes of things, or ends for which they were made, but by a careful inſpection into their nature, and obſerving what they are adapted to in their frame and conſtitution? For whatſoever the ends are to which they are manifeſtly ſuited, theſe we reaſonably gather to have been the ends propoſed by God when he created them. So the ſeveral *Senſes* were made for their reſpective objects. Nor does this hold as to the *uſes* of things only; but likewiſe as to their *duration*, or the time of their continuing to ſerve for ſuch *uſes*. Things, which *nature* hath fitted to laſt longer than others, were unqueſtionably *intended*, in the ordinary courſe of events, to laſt longer; and do ſo, where nothing extraordinary happens

* In the ſame Eſſay.

pens out. No one fears, when he erects a monument of braſs or marble to the memory of his friend, that it will fail as ſoon as the body turns to duſt; tho' both equally depend on the *will* of God. And when bodies do fall into ruin, it is according to the natural courſe of things, from the wearing of the parts by their inteſtine motions, or from the actions, of ſurrounding bodies, not by the *immediate power* of God. Thus the human body is deſtroyed by external violence, or inward decay. But is that a reaſon why the ſoul, which is liable to neither of theſe, but fitted to live for ever, ſhould die with the body? Or why we ſhould think it does? The ſoul, therefore, in its nature, having a plain relation to immortality, may be reaſonably concluded to have been ordained for an endleſs life; as long as we have *no reaſons* on the other ſide, and a great many *moral arguments* for its living beyond the grave.

SECT. VIII. If we add, that it is not a bare natural *permanence* but *immortality*; and the natural immortality of a Being of very great, and ſingular, *excellence*, the argument from hence, for a Future State, will have nothing wanting to it. *Unthinking matter*, as to itſelf, is not a whit better than *nothing*, nor differs from it; having no conſciouſneſs of its own exiſtence, or perception of any thing beſides. To be, or not to be, is here perfectly indifferent. In this regard, the whole viſible world,

world, comprehending the heavens and the earth, is not equal in value to a ſingle ſoul. The world knows not that it exiſts, is not entertained with its own beauty, is altogether lumpiſh and paſſive, whereas the ſoul has capacities for knowledge, virtue, and happineſs, which God alone, who is infinite, can fill. The *natural immortality* of the ſoul ſecures it againſt all the invaſions of *ſecond cauſes*. And its *ſuperior excellence* hints a reaſon why God, by his *immediate hand*, will not deſtroy it when the body dies, whether it makes a *right* or *wrong* uſe of its faculties: not if it makes the *right* uſe of them, becauſe there is an obvious congruity that a Being created with a *remote* capacity for happineſs, ſhould enjoy the happineſs of which, by its own good conduct, it is become *immediately* capable; and, having, by time and induſtry, improved its faculties, ſhould have the benefit and advantage of this improvement: not if it makes a *wrong* uſe of theſe valuable gifts, becauſe it is but fit it ſhould be puniſhed for its ingratitude, and reap the fruits of its ill management. This clearly proves a Future State for all ſouls; whether it does, or does not, with the ſame evidence, ſhew the *eternity* of that State. Bodies themſelves undergo various viciſſitudes, but are not annihilated; and much leſs then are we to imagine this of ſpirits, which are incomparably more excellent in their nature than any portions of matter can be. If it be

ſaid, that in the corporeal ſyſtem, tho' an organized body hath more beauty and art in it than a pebble ſtone, or the moſt ſolid maſſes of matter, yet we ſee the moſt curious and elegant ſtructures of this kind come to ruin, and in leſs time than many other bodies. And why may not ſomething like this happen in the world of ſpirits? I anſwer; the caſes are not at all parallel. Material beings are in their own nature corruptible; if they periſh, it is not by the deſtroying hand of God, as I took notice before, but thro' the feeble texture of their parts, and from the impreſſions of other matter; whereas the deſtruction of the ſoul muſt be immediately by God himſelf, or can never be accompliſhed. Every thing laſts a longer, or a ſhorter time, according to its conſtitution. The ſun, particularly, hath ſhone with an unfading brightneſs ſome thouſands of years already, and may do the ſame, for thouſands of years to come. And ſhall the ſoul, which would naturally retain its vigour numberleſs ages after the heavenly fires, without freſh recruits, were all burnt out, be extinguiſhed with the lamp of the body, which is put out by every little accident? We are further to conſider, when an organized body falls to pieces, the matter of it does not become uſeleſs, but goes to make up other bodies. The world is maintained by theſe changes σώζεσι δὲ κοσμον, &c. * the world is preſerved,

* *Antonin*, l. 2. cap. 3.

preſerved, as by the viciſſitudes of the elements, ſo, of thoſe bodies that are compounded of them. This is the obſervation of *Antoninus* the *Emperor*, and *Philoſopher*. And we have the ſame in *Lucretius*.†

Cedit enim rerum novitate extruſa vetuſtas, &c.

Old things are thruſt out by new, which are built out of their ruins. Materials are needed to ſupply following generations. Which is the reaſon, that things always have been, and always will be, fleeting and periſhable, as they are now. And thus while life is beſtowed on none, as a perpetual poſſeſſion, it is given to all for their uſe. The atheiſtical Poet applies this to the whole of man, which he will have to fall under the ſtroke of death, that the dead man may ſerve to ſwell the bulk of ſome other Being.

Nec quidquam in barathrum, nec tartara decidit atra.

And the arguing would not be ſo extravagantly abſurd, in caſe man was nothing elſe but a compoſition of matter. But the ſoul of man is an immaterial ſubſtance; and ſuch a ſubſtance, if uncloathed of thought, cannot afterwards become another thinking Being, or

† Lib. 3.

part of ſuch Being. For the ſubſtance, being one and invariable, ſhould it again be endued with thought, muſt become the very ſame thinking ſubſtance, that is, the very ſame ſoul it was before; and ſo nothing is gained by this privation. There is, therefore, no reaſon to ſuſpect that the ſoul, a Being of ſuch excellent capacities, and naturally immortal, will have its ixeſtence cut ſhort by the immediate hand of God, purely that it may not ſurvive the body.

CHAP. IV.

In which the argument for a Future State from the desire of Immortality *is examined; and shewn to be conclusive.*

SECT. I. THERE is in man *a desire of immortality*. This desire is universal, being found in all who are capable of forming a notion of immortality. There never was that person who could subdue it; not even the despairing wretch who flies to death for succour, and embraces the hope of annihilation as his only refuge. At the very instant he dreads an immortality which he *fears* will be miserable, and withdraws himself from a life which he *finds* so, he wishes there were no such reason for chusing death, and preferring the utter extinction of his Being; which is a manifest argument, that he hath not yet put off the general desire of immortality. This desire betrays itself in the most professed enemies to the notion of a Future State, and the immortality of the human soul. Not able to suppress the desire, they only change its object, and from themselves transfer it to their memory. *Epicurus**, as little as he cared for his soul's living out of his body, was willing to believe that his name

* Diogen. Laert.

would live, and when dying, flattered himſelf with the thoughts of ſurviving in the memory of his Scholars, and with the reputation which his philoſophical works would procure him. And *Horace*†, a Diſciple of his, built the ſame hope upon his Poems.

Non omnis moriar; multaq; pars mei
Vitabit Libitinam.

" Not all of me ſhall die; but a conſiderable part " ſhall elude the fatal blow." But what can be more irrational than thus to ſhift the object of this deſire? And laying aſide the proſpect of a real, ſenſible, immortality, to ſubſtitute in its room an empty name, a ſound, a phantom, which can be nothing to us, when we ourſelves are nothing? Since we cannot vanquiſh this deſire, we ſhould leave it in its *natural* ſtate, in which it excites us to purſue after ſomething real, and ſubſtantial; not to hunt a mere ſhadow. I call this its *natural* ſtate, becauſe the deſire is not only *univerſal*, but *ſtrictly natural*; it cannot but be ſuppoſed in *innocent* nature, and, therefore, is from the *God of nature*; and if from God, was undoubtedly given with an intent it ſhould be in our power to have it gratified. *Nature never gravitates towards nothing*; all its appetites are matched with ſuitable objects; the ſuppoſal

† Lib. 3. Ode 30.

poſal of the contrary implying a defect, not only in the divine *power*, or *goodneſs*, but *veracity* too.

SECT. II. This is the argument. And upon the whole, I believe, it is a very good one. However, that I may not conceal any thing that ſeems to make againſt it, I ſhall freely mention what hath ſometimes entered into my thoughts, and even prevailed with me to queſtion the validity of it. Without more words, then. What if this deſire was not in the deſign of God when he created man? Will it not then, be impoſſible to demonſtrate, barely from this deſire, that God intended to ſatisfy it? Can any thing be more evident than that God deſigned not the gratification of the appetite, if he deſigned not the appetite itſelf? Now that our Maker might not properly, and directly, intend the exiſtence of any ſuch deſire, ſeems to follow from hence, that a creature like man, being ſuppoſed, this deſire will inevitably coexiſt with it, whether God intended it, or no; having a neceſſary connexion with the rational faculty, and the principle of ſelf-love. A Being poſſeſt of *Reaſon*, in the extent that man enjoys it in, cannot forbear ſtretching its views beyond any given bounds, and ſo cannot chuſe but have the idea of immortality, and, being together with this idea of immortality, filled with an unextinguiſhable love of itſelf, for the ſame reaſon as it wills its preſent exiſtence,

(becauſe it loves itſelf) it muſt deſire immortality. And is it not from the premiſes an eaſy inference, that the deſire of immortality may be, where it was not deſigned? And from hence, that it was not deſigned by God, it cannot any way engage *him* to gratify it; or warrant *us* to conclude that he will do ſo? But (ſaith Dr. *Sherlock**) "That ſelf-love "leads men to the deſire of immortality, I "think a very good argument to prove, that "all reaſonable creatures are immortal, un-"leſs the very frame and conſtitution of their "natures does neceſſarily and unavoidably "cheat them into fond, and fooliſh hopes." To which may it not again be replied, that tho' it be neceſſary that we *deſire* immortality, yet there is no neceſſity that we *hope* for it? *Hope* is a mixture of *deſire* and *belief*. And if from the *deſire* we will proceed to the *belief* of immortality, we delude ourſelves, and have no cauſe to complain of being impoſed on by our Maker.

SECT. III. But ſhall we thus give up an argument which hath been always deemed unanſwerable? I imagine, it may be eaſily defended, notwithſtanding what hath been now urged againſt it. For either this deſire of immortality ſprings neceſſarily out of *the reaſon of things*, ſo as to be independent of the divine Will, or it does not. If it does not, we muſt then ſay, that it was made a part of our nature

* Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State.

nature by God, when he might have withheld it; that he planted it in our breasts, and interwove it in our frame: and in consequence of this, we are obliged to acknowledge, there is the highest probability, that he who put it into our nature, did it with an intention to make good what we may esteem a kind of *natural*, or tacit *promise*; especially when it is further considered, that the *desire*, without the *hope*, of immortality, would, as things are at present ordered, be a torment to the mind. On the other hand; if it be a necessary consequence of the nature of things, God cannot but approve it; since what is necessary is good and fitting; no *evil* being necessary. Tho' the natures and essences of things are in some sense independent of the Will of God, they are yet entirely agreeable to that Will. All that belongs to the essence of a thing is a necessary part of the goodness and perfection of that thing; for which reason, God, whose Will does ever terminate on that which is best, must be necessarily pleased with it; and, being so, must be supposed to act after the same manner as if he was the *free cause* of it. In one regard, God produces *freely* those attributes which are *necessary*; being free to produce, or not to produce, the beings to which they are necessary. And, when they are considered under the characteristick of *necessary*, he is, even in this view,

view, *voluntary* in producing them, the Will of God always going along with whatever the nature of things renders neceſſary. The reſult is, that God's approbation of the deſire of immortality is in effect the ſame as if he planted it in the ſoul by an act diſtinct from the creation of the Being; and equally a proof that he provided an object for a deſire that is entirely coincident with his Will.

SECT. IV. The argument for a Future State, founded in the deſire of immortality, receives a new acceſſion of ſtrength from theſe *two conſiderations* further; that it was manifeſtly ordained for *an incentive to virtue*; and that in the ſame proportion as any man's *virtue* encreaſes, his *deſire*, as *a regular tendency towards the ultimate happineſs of his nature*, grows more vigorous and active. The deſire of immortality was evidently deſigned as a moſt powerful incentive to virtue. This is the obvious inſtruction it holds forth to us, that we ſhould make it our chief care, and higheſt ambition, to pleaſe that Being, on whom our own depends. Is my happineſs, both here, and hereafter, lodged in the hand of God? Surely then, the deſire of future happineſs, by which I am acted, admoniſhes me to think how I may gain the approbation of him, my ſupreme diſpoſer. To compleat the idea of felicity, is the perfection of the *human faculties* no leſs neceſſary than that

of

of the *object?* For certain then, it is my intereſt, to be continually imployed in correcting the diſorders of my nature, ſupplying its defects, and acquiring all thoſe amiable and excellent diſpoſitions of mind which will prepare me for that future, happy, ſtate of being which I ſo ardently deſire. It is not the bare protracting, or ſpinning out, of his exiſtence, that any man is fond of, but a perpetuity of happineſs; for which our natural deſires and aſpirations teach us to provide, in the uſe of all thoſe means that Virtue and Religion preſcribe to this end. If our inclinations and appetites have any meaning at all, this is the plain meaning, and interpretation, of the deſire I am now ſpeaking of. And there are not wanting ſome who attend to theſe ſecret whiſpers of nature, and *by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality.* And when they follow the intimations which their Creator hath given them of his Will in the very frame of their beings; when their deſire of future happineſs, proves, as God intended it, an effectual motive to the practice of virtue, as the only way to it; ſhall they, after all, be fruſtrated of their aim? Reaſon is ready to cry out, *it cannot be.*

SECT. V. And if we conſider that the influence of this deſire upon a life of virtue, and of a life of virtue upon this deſire, is *mutual*; ſo that in the ſame proportion as any man's

man's virtue is on the growing hand, this generous desire shoots up with it, like a plant of congenial nature, and becomes more strong and active; we shall be more satisfied still, that we do not argue wrong, when from the desire of a more perfect, and durable state, we infer the *futurity* of it. The better any man is, the better he is fitted for the proper felicity of a reasonable creature; a felicity adapted to the best part of his nature, and to which the inferior, and animal part, is an insuperable hindrance; a felicity, in fine, of which he hath some idea, but hardly any enjoyment in this life. This idea of a higher kind of life, these beginnings and presages of it in the relishes of virtue, and the ascent of the soul to God, enkindle the most earnest longings after it. The good man wishes, and hopes, that death may not be like droping the curtain between him and all further prospects of God, and things divine, of truth and happiness; that the seeds of knowledge and goodness which were sown in him by the hand of his Maker, which with a great deal of labour, and some little success, he hath cherished and cultivated, and which begin to shew themselves, and bud, and blossom, will not be niped at once by death's cold blasts, and quite killed and destroyed; as they must be, if he himself cease for ever to exist. Should I not be unjust to the author and encourager of all good, if I entertained such a thought, that, when

when my desire of immortality fires and animates me in the race of virtue, and every new advance I make in virtue invigorates my desire of immortality, that world, by which I am allured, and for which I am preparing, exists no where but in my own heated imagination? It seems to me that, on this supposition, there would be a *double* delusion, one of *nature*, the other of *virtue*; nature would have deluded all men, and virtue have deluded its followers even more than nature; and, which is worse, this delusion, being traced up to its source, must be ascribed to him who framed our natures, and hath prompted us to the pursuit of virtue, or the imitation of himself, among other motives, by the *desire of a happy existence after death.*

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The belief *of a Future State is of the greateſt neceſſity and importance to mankind*; therefore *there is ſuch a State.*

SECT. I. ACcording to the preſent frame of human nature, and circumſtances of human affairs, the belief of a future exiſtence is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the ſupport of every thing good and valuable in the world, that ſhould we imagine all apprehenſions of any after ſtate to be extinguiſhed, and the perſuaſion, univerſally eſtabliſhed, to be this, *that the ſoul periſhes utterly and everlaſtingly with the body*, man would be the moſt *irregular* and moſt *unhappy* of all beings.

SECT. II. *Man would be the moſt irregular thing in the creation*; capable of *Religion* and *Virtue*, yet loſt to both. The whole frame of Religion, like a noble and lofty edifice, raiſed on a weak foundation, would quickly fall to the ground. That aſſertion of the Writer to the *Hebrews* might paſs for an indiſputable maxim, tho' it was not found in inſpired ſcripture, that *he who cometh unto God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* The *Being of God* is but one part of the foundation; the other, and that which the building chiefly reſts

reſts on, is *God's ſignifying*, ſome way or other, and at one time or other, *his gracious acceptance of thoſe that worſhip him in ſincerity*; from whence they may be able to conclude, that they do not ſerve him for nought. It was the obſervation of the *wiſe man*, which the experience of more than two thouſand years hath confirmed, that *all things come alike to all*; *that there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to him that ſacrificeth and to him that ſacrificeth not*. For any viſible diſtinction that is made between the moſt devout worſhipper of the Deity, and ſuch as laugh at all Religion, there may be no ſuch thing as *a particular Providence*, by which I mean the *Almighty*'s *varying his dealings with the children of the men, agreeably to their different temper and behaviour towards him*. Does *God always*, or *often*, make ſuch a difference as this between the *pious* and the *impious?* Or does he *ever* do it *in ſuch a manner* that we can certainly argue, from the external diſpenſations of his Providence, that he approves one man, and diſapproves another; and that the man whom God approves is much happier, as the favourite of Providence, than the other? The notion of a Future State being once laid aſide, I deſpair of ſeeing any clear proof of *a particular Providence*; and challenge any one to give an account of thoſe common and ſweeping calamities, which involve alike the innocent, and the guilty. I ſay, laying

aſide

aſide the notion of a Future State; for, upon the *received hypotheſis* of a world to come, the view of things is quite altered, and we have no reaſon to be offended at God's ſeeming diſregard of the man whom he loves; ſince every ſuch perſon hath not only the hope of a future recompence to animate and encourage him, but may depend on his being at preſent the care of his Providence ſo far, that all the circumſtances and events of life ſhall be made to contribute to his final felicity.

SECT. III. To proceed then—If piety had no marks of the divine approbation in this life, and no proſpect of the leaſt reward hereafter, I doubt, we ſhould immediately ſee the temples forſaken, and the ſervice of the Deity neglected. *Intereſt* and *Reputation* might be called in to aſſiſt, but would be able to do little towards preventing the general revolt. Theſe, indeed, ſuppoſe a prevailing belief of God's government of the world, and a ſtate of recompences beyond the grave; for were not this belief, but the contrary, fixed in mens mind, not ſo much as the outſide of Religion would be in faſhion any where. The worſhip of a Deity is eſtabliſhed in all nations, becauſe men, in all nations, are poſſeſt with a perſuaſion of rewards and puniſhments. Therefore it is that publick eſteem is annexed to Religion, and infamy to the neglect of it. Otherwiſe, no man would promote his intereſt or credit by a ſhow

a ſhow of piety. Beſides which, it is to be conſidered, that theſe motives will go but a very little way. There is ſuch a thing as *inward Religion*; and it is this alone by which men can be inſpired with an ambitious zeal to ſacrifice every thing elſe to the view of pleaſing their Maker, and ſteadily directed and ſwayed in the conduct of their lives. Now on this Religion of the heart, nothing that is merely external (as the favour, and good opinion of men) can have the leaſt influence. Will a perſon that hath no regard but to theſe make conſcience of paying to God the homage and adoration of his ſoul? Why ſhould he? Why, in truth, need he, when men cannot look into his breaſt, or even into his cloſet to ſee what paſſes there? What is there to bind the ſecret, or difficult and ſelf-denying duties of piety on ſuch a man's conſcience? Or, indeed, any duties at all? For conſcience hath a neceſſary reſpect to ſome inviſible Being that inſpects its motions, and hath both a *right* and *power* to judge it. And where conſcience is not concerned, there will be no ſteady and invariable rule of action, inaſmuch as intereſt may change, and a man's acquaintance happen to fall among thoſe who reckon it no ſuch diſgrace to live in the contempt of all Religion; and in this caſe, if he hath an eye only to intereſt and reputation, farewel to his Religion.

SECT. IV. There are thoſe who make a great deal of noiſe with the *decency* and *congruity* of the thing. So the *Epicureans* did of old; and ſo others have done ſince, who, it is to be feared, have, at bottom, been as little in earneſt as that atheiſtical tribe of men. The divine nature is adorable on the account of its excellencies and perfections. It is fit that men ſhould worſhip God tho' they have no expectations from him. There is a decorum in it; juſt as there is in the reſpect that is paid to men of great power, or of eminent parts and learning; and they that have any ſenſe of what is proper and becoming will be moved to their duty by this conſideration. But however plauſible this reaſoning may look, there is very little in it. The generality of mankind have no regard to ſuch refined ſpeculations. *Self-love* is the great handle by which Religion *firſt* takes hold of the minds of men, which are uſually too groſs to be enamoured of things that have no aſpect on the condition of their Beings, to make it better or worſe. And they would be leſs likely to have a regard to *fitneſs* in this caſe, becauſe the propriety of worſhipping the Deity, if he did not any way expreſs his acceptance of ſuch worſhip, and it was never expected he would do it, would not be ſo very apparent.

The *heathen Moraliſt* * very well argues in confutation of the *Epicurean* ſcheme, which allowed

* Cicero de Nat. Deor.

allowed the *Being* of a God, but denied a *Providence* and a *Future State*; what ſhould make you teach that God is to be worſhipped by men, if ſo be he is not only regardleſs of them, but of every thing elſe here below? Why, the divine nature is moſt excellent and glorious, ſo as by its own charms and attractives to allure the wiſe man to a veneration of it, *habet enim venerationem juſtam quicquid excellit.* But can there be any thing excellent in that nature, which, being wholly taken up with its own pleaſures, is eternally void of all action from without? *Epicurus*, as he afterwards goes on, took the way to root out of the minds of men all the ſeeds of Religion, when he repreſented the immortal gods as never extending their ſuccour to the indigent; for he takes away that which is moſt proper to the beſt and moſt excellent nature; ſince nothing is better, nothing more excellent, than goodneſs and beneficence.

This reaſoning holds in a leſſer degree on the denial of a *particular Providence* in this world, and of any life of recompences after this, tho' it be granted that God adminſters the affairs of mankind; becauſe, on the principles I am now combating, I ſee but little difference between no Providence, and a Providence that hath no reſpect to the righteous more than to the wicked; and can ſcarcely look on that as true beneficence, or a perfection of the Deity, which

flows out indiſcriminately to the worthy and unworthy, not diſtinguiſhing one from the other, either *firſt*, or *laſt*; which makes me venture to ſay of the ſubtle reaſoners (I am ſpeaking of thoſe who deny a Future State upon any principles whatſoever, whether of *Reaſon* or *Revelation*) as the ſame Author doth of *Epicurus*, that while they own a God in words, they do in effect deny him. But is not *the Will of God* alone reaſon ſufficient why we ſhould worſhip him, who have received our Beings, and every thing that is valuable in life, from his hands? Allowing this to be a reaſon of as great weight as you pleaſe with grateful and ingenuous ſpirits, and ſuch as uſe themſelves to ſober reflection, yet the queſtion is, whether there are many to whom it would *in fact* prove ſo? Whether they would not be much fewer than on ſuppoſition of mens being univerſally perſuaded that none who worſhip God ſincerely ſhall go unrewarded? Beſides which, all but the religious inclined, inſtead of granting that the Deity expected any external marks of homage from mankind, would, without heſitating, decide againſt it, becauſe of his not having given them any intimations of his pleaſure to this purpoſe. The ſum is, that if men had caſt off the belief of a Future State, they would have no reaſon to believe *a particular Providence*, which ſeparates betwixt the *precious* and the *vile*; and, if they believed

lieved neither the one or other of these, there would be no effectual motive left, to keep up *Religion* in the world; nothing that can be substituted in the room of this great principle, that *God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, being sufficient to answer this end.

SECT. V. With Religion, *Virtue* must soon languish and expire, not barely because *Virtue* grows out of Religion*, and is best supported by it, but from its immediate dependence on the notion of a governing Providence, and a state of retribution. By *Virtue*, in this place, I mean *a right behaviour towards others, and with regard to a man's self* in opposition to injustice and intemperance. The existence of a *law of nature* superinducing a difference in actions over and above that which is natural and intrinsick, would not be easily made out to the conviction of persons not willing to admit of any such law. It is, I own, manifest that *Virtue* and *Vice* differ in their natural consequences, and the difference in their natural consequences may be esteemed an argument of their being differently regarded by God—Be it so; then, I say, our eating the forbidden fruit notwithstanding all the opposition we must rush through, and all the inconveniences we must suffer, before we can come at it, is a considerable aggrava-

* Πασων των αρετων ηγεμων εστιν η ευσεβεια. Hierocl.

tion of our guilt, as it discovers *a heart more fully set in us to do evil.* And *Vice*, the more aggravated it is, must merit the severer punishment. But how is it punished, if there be no other life? Only as it clashes with the *constitution of our natures*; not as attended with the aggravation of being committed in defiance of its *known* and *experienced* evil. This circumstance, tho' it bespeaks a greater daringness in doing wickedly, is not considered and provided against by the *Governour of the world*; as indeed none of those circumstances are, which vary the degrees of evil in an action *to infinity.* The natural consequences of a bad action are the same (as, for example, of *excess*) whether it be done knowingly, or ignorantly, on a surprize or deliberately, with the full consent of the will, or with a mixture of involuntariness, under a strong temptation or a very slight one. Or, if there be any odds, the most hardy sinners, your veterans in *Vice*, suffer least. And what now is become of the divine law and government, when the greatest offenders come off *as well* as others, and it may be *better?* Put the case further, that a man judges it his wisest part to chuse *Vice*, with all its disadvantages, in some instances of it, and in certain circumstances, before a stubborn, inflexible *Virtue*, (as it is very possible he may, on the prospect of annihilation) what is there to incline such a one to think that God doth any way interest himself

himſelf in the matter, and hath not rather left him at his liberty to purſue *that courſe* which will bring him in moſt pleaſure? And what that is, every man will be ready to fancy he can judge beſt for himſelf. From hence would not men infer they were under no obligation but to *ſocial Virtue*, and this not an obligation from *Law* ſo properly as from *mere Reaſon*, which will not allow us to do to another what we would not that he ſhould do unto us? A life of ſoftneſs and indulgence to ſenſual inclinations would have little criminal in it; the *Apoſtle Paul* himſelf ſeeming to give us leave to reaſon in this caſe, as the votaries of pleaſure do, *let us eat and drink for to morrow we die. To morrow* we die, and are as before we were born; let us therefore live *to day*. It is true, he immediately adds, *be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners*; in which words he warns us againſt the principle as moſt falſe and pernicious, that man dieth as the beaſts, without cenſuring the deduction from it, that, *dying* as the beaſts, it would be no great matter if we *lived* as they.

SECT. VI. But could we, with the ſame ſtrength and clearneſs, demonſtrate the obligations to *Virtue*, whether there be or be not, a Future State, yet the *cauſe* of *Virtue* would be very little advanced by this means. Between *Virtue* and *Vice* there is an irrecon-

cileable war; and where the victory will fall, is not difficult to gueſs, if *Virtue ſingly*, or with only a few feeble, and ſometimes treacherous, aids, be left to encounter with an army of vulgar opinions, eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, loud and impetuous paſſions, that are liſted on the ſide of *Vice*, and cloſely linked together by one common intereſt. Paſſions muſt be oppoſed to paſſions; the hopes and fears of a life to come, to the love of wealth, power, pleaſure, to diſcontent, envy, pride, anger, revenge, and the dread of thoſe numerous evils to which a man may happen to expoſe himſelf by his adherence to the intereſt of *Virtue*. It is not only agreeable to Reaſon, but of the greateſt uſe to mankind, (ſaith one of the *Antients**) that they be giving to know that the gods will baniſh to the greateſt diſtance from their abodes all thoſe who are wicked in their lives; the conſideration of which, if men have any awe of God upon their minds, will be the principal thing that keeps them from criminal actions. And though they who think the ſoul to be mortal (ſaith another of them†) may talk ſpeciouſly on the ſubject of *Virtue*, yet they cannot be in earneſt: all theſe auxiliaries which we may call in to the aſſiſtance of *Virtue*, after we have diſcharged the belief of another life, being far from an equal match for the inclinations of the body, and the temptations of the world.

SECT.

* Cicero de Conſol. † Hier. in Carm. Pythag.

SECT. VII. *Honour* is a fine word, and for few, or none, but fine people. *Vulgar minds* are too coarſe to be capable of ſo delicate a ſenſation. And it is very much to be queſtioned whether the greater part of thoſe who in ordinary caſes are ſome way influenced by this principle, would find it proof againſt the aſſaults of uncommon temptations. *Virtue* is eſteemed honourable, either becauſe it is becoming our *rank* and *ſtation in life*, or the *dignity of our nature*; and *Vice* diſhonourable, for the contrary reaſons. But as to that *honour* which conſiſts in a man's acting agreeably to his *profeſſion*, or *birth and condition*, every body knows, it hath no other ſtandard but *faſhion* and *opinion*, which arbitrarily ſtamp the name of brave and honourable on the moſt unreaſonable actions, and moſt deſtructive of the order of ſociety, and rights of mankind, no leſs than on thoſe that are moſt reaſonable and uſeful; of which the cuſtom of *duelling* is an undeniable inſtance. The *dignity of human nature* is a conſideration of great weight, if the governing principle in man be immortal; otherwiſe, is a mere trifle. For what mighty preheminance hath man above the beaſt, if the man dies as the beaſt does? In eſtimating the value of things, their durableneſs is to be taken into the account. The moſt excellent faculties alone are not ſufficient; becauſe the real worth of any endowment is in a *ratio* compounded

of

of the *endowment itself*, and the *time* of poſſeſſing and enjoying it. Let us imagine a creature of *angelical perfections* to be brought into being one hour, and turned out of it the next; knowing this beforehand, he would have little reaſon to value himſelf on his vaſt capacities, to ſtand upon the punctilios of reſpect from other beings, or to make the dignity of his nature the rule of his actions, rather than his lower inclinations, if he had any ſuch, that were clamorous and importunate, like thoſe which we are ſubject to. Now to man who hath the idea of eternity, the little difference there is between an hour, and a duration of forty or threeſcore years, muſt appear as nothing. Whoever therefore ſhould boaſt of the dignity of his nature, believing that after a momentary exiſtence, and that obſcure and wretched too, he ſhall return to his original darkneſs, would only deſerve to be laughed at. Juſt ſo, do kings and emperors on the ſtage ſtrut in mock majeſty, and ſpeak as big as if allied to the gods, till, retiring behind the ſcenes, they are ſtripped of their robes and titles, and paſs undiſtinguiſhed in the crowd.

SECT. VIII. The *beauty of Virtue* is much talked of by thoſe who are, or would be thought, her admirers. And, without all doubt, *Virtue* is a moſt lovely form, and hath charms enough to make her ſelf-beloved for her own ſake; *beloved*, I ſay, but not

not always *choſen*. Had *Virtue* nothing but her beauty to recommend her, either in hand or reverſion, men might praiſe *Virtue*, and be in love with it as much as you pleaſe, but would *marry* intereſt. Nor would their conduct, upon examination, be ſo exceeding blameable, ſince *neceſſity* is to be conſulted before *ornament*. And whereas it may be ſaid, that *moral beauty* is not a mere outſide, but a real excellence, and a complication of qualities; it is natural to aſk, if *Virtue* be ſo deſerving, why is it not more in favour with the great *Parent of the Univerſe?* Why is ſhe turned off without a fortune? This does not look as if ſhe merited the character ſhe hath among mortals; or if the Deity concerned himſelf much what reſpect and uſage ſhe met with. But *Virtue* hath nothing ſettled on her, becauſe *ſhe needs nothing*; ſhe is *ſelf-ſufficient*. How can that man ſhiver in the coldeſt ſeaſon, who hath this cloak to wrap himſelf up in? *Mea virtute me involvo*:* Or how complain of hunger and penury, who feeds on this luxurious diet? I muſt own, I always ſuſpect ſome ill deſign, as often as I hear *Virtue* complemented at this extravagant rate. It is not out of any real kindneſs to *Virtue*, but to inſinuate, that there is no life to come, no future reward, becauſe *Virtue* can do well enough without it, and is not ſo mercenary as to expect it; by which means, theſe men betray the cauſe which they make a ſhew

* Hor.

a ſhew of ſo much zeal in defending by cutting off its neceſſary ſuccours. "As to "the *fortreſs*, *temple*, or *palace* of *Virtue* "ſituated on a mountain, after the emble- "matical way, as we ſee repreſented in "ſome pieces wrote upon this ſubject; there "is nothing (ſaith a noble Author) of this "kind expreſt by our hiſtorian; and ſhould "this, or any thing of the like nature, pre- "ſent itſelf in our deſign, it would fill the "mind with foreign fancies and myſterious "views, no way agreeable to the taſte and "genius of this piece. Nor is there any thing "at the ſame time on pleaſures ſide by way "of oppoſition to the palace of *Virtue*, which "if expreſt, would on this account deſtroy "the juſt ſimplicity or correſpondence of our "work."*

I would hope that the ſecret of this is not that the Author would have us look no further than the preſent life for the reward of our *Virtue*; *Virtue is its own reward.* But, with ſubmiſſion, even on this foot, the piece, conſidered only as it ſtrikes the imagination, is not well deſigned. The ingenious Author hath ſeen fit himſelf to let the mountain ſtand; whereas he ſhould either have taken both the *mountain*, and *temple*, or left out both. A ſteep and craggy mountain (by which is emblematically ſignified the difficulty of a virtuous courſe) affords of itſelf but a diſ-

* Judgment of *Hercules* by the late Lord *Shaftsbury*.

a disagreeable idea; and when *Virtue* points her *Hero* to the mountain, it was but little encouragement she gave him to try the ascent, that he should have his labour for his pains, and being arrived to the summit, and finding nothing to pay him for so many wearisom steps, should only think how to come down again without hazarding his neck. There is a pleasure in *Virtue*, a very great one; but then this pleasure is most sensible after a person hath conquered the difficulties of it, and attained to a habit of acting virtuously; that is, after he is got to the top of the mountain, where he may, therefore, justly expect to meet with verdant plains, with a noble and well furnished palace, to repose himself in after his fatigues, and to enjoy the pleasure resulting from the contemplation of the most glorious objects, and an everlasting friendship with wise, kind, and happy spirits. Labour is never to be chosen for labour's sake. As for sensual pleasure, there is no occasion for any thing on her side to answer to the palace of *Virtue*; all her allurements are present, beds of flowers, garlands of roses, rich banquets, softness, and gayety; but she hath no further prospects; or none but what are sad and gloomy. The opinion of the *Sadduces*, that there are no future recompences, is supposed to have been first occasioned by a mistake of their founder *Sadocus*, who, with the other disciples of *Antigonus*, having been taught to serve God

God without any view to an after reward, imagined his masters meaning to be, that no reward was to be expected, besides the present pleasure of a religious life; because this reward being *sufficient*, there was *really* no other. So *dangerous a thing* is it to represent *Virtue* and *Piety* as standing firm enough on their own basis, without the hope of future happiness to support them; I may add, so *suspicious* in the manner it is done by some. This is not unlikely to be the reason that the *Stoicks* very often talk so coldly and doubtfully about the *soul*'s *immortality*; for their *wise man* being *self-sufficient*, was sure to be happy for the time he existed, whether that time was longer or shorter, in defiance of all the evils of life, and the apprehensions of death, as what might possibly for ever end his Being.

SECT. IX. It must be acknowledged, that *benevolence* is a most serviceable principle, hardly less necessary in the *moral world* than the *law of attraction* is in the *corporeal*; and, perhaps, as universal; a wise, and kind provision of the God of nature, by which men are insensibly restrained from doing injurious actions, and prompted, as by a most powerful *impetus*, to acts of kindness and compassion. But then, there is another principle in human nature, stiled *self-love*, which works more certainly, and irresistibly than this; and therefore, whatever benevolent inclinations are planted in the heart of man, they cannot exert

exert themſelves in ſenſible effects, without the leave of the reigning paſſion. The object of *ſelf-love* is *ſelf-intereſt*, real, or apprehended; between which, and the intereſt of other men, as often as there happens to be a diſpute, which cannot be terminated without ſacrificing one to the other, it is eaſy to foreſee which will be given up. Where a perſon hath *two* intereſts of his *own* to purſue, a leſſer and a greater, one in this life, the other in the next, his natural benevolence, enforced by a ſenſe of duty, and reflections on the amiableneſs of this temper, may not find much oppoſition from ſelf-love, when it perſuades him to forego the advantage which an act of injuſtice promiſes him, or to ſubmit to the pain and loſs that muſt be ſuſtained in doing good: eſpecially when *ſelf-love* knows it ſhall not only be indemnified, but finds its account in every inſtance of reſignation. Not ſo when this life is ſuppoſed to be *our all*. Conſidering the many ſhapes under which *ſelf-love* appears, as of avarice, ambition, ſenſuality, ſloth; partly ariſing from temper and complexion, and partly from falſe opinions of the things, in which the happineſs of life is imagined to conſiſt; as the inclinations and intereſts of men will be perpetually interfering, *benevolence* will generally plead in vain againſt *ſelf-love*, having no propoſals to make of a return. From hence may be infered the ſmall dependance we can have on *publick ſpirit*; unleſs

unleſs it happens to be the character of the times; in which caſe it is not to be aſcribed to *Nature* or *Virtue*, ſo much as to *Cuſtom* and *Education*, which may take another and very different turn, as we know they did among the ancient *Romans*. It was the opinion of an eminent heathen Writer*, that no man, without great hopes of immortality, would offer himſelf to death for his Country. To be ſure, mankind, in general, would think they had but little reaſon to make ſuch ſacrifices; nay, and the profeſſors of *Virtue* themſelves, who would be ready to aſk, "Why, under the name of *Virtue*, ſhould "we abandon the body, if the ſoul ſo pe-"riſh with it, that even that *Virtue* ſubſiſts "no longer, the love of which makes us "willing to die?" †

SECT. X. *Fear* of the many evils which threaten *Vice* in *this world*, particularly from the ſtroke of *publick juſtice*, beſides that it can at beſt produce but a *negative virtue*, is very inſufficient, even for that purpoſe. Let the inſtances of men ruined in their fortunes, ſhattered in their conſtitutions, expoſed to ſhame, and infamy, and death, by their crimes and immoralities, be never ſo frequent; they who had nothing more to fear, would not much regard the warning; but, on a vain confidence of eſcaping better than others, by a cloſer and more ſkilful management, would venture

* Cicero Tuſc. Qu. L. 1. † Hierocles.

venture the conſequence; and harden themſelves with ſuch ſayings as this, "That they "had better run a diſtant hazard of periſhing "once for all, in the purſuit of wealth and "pleaſure, than live always poor, and indo-"lent."

SECT. XI. *Natural Conſcience* may be thought to make any other guard upon *Virtue* needleſs. But they who believe ſo, ſhew themſelves never to have examined very narrowly, by what means conſcience comes to have any influence *at firſt*, on the generality of mankind; that it is not, as it *convinces* them of their duty, and exerciſes its authority in paſſing judgment upon actions, as good, or bad; but by thoſe *hopes* and *fears* which are always at hand to back its ſentence. Now take away the hopes and fears of an *inviſible world*, and the hopes and fears of an *inviſible God* will vaniſh of courſe, or be too weak to have any conſiderable effect. And from all this, is not the concluſion unavoidable, that, the doctrine of *no Future State* being univerſally received, *Virtue* would decline, and *Vice* grow and advance apace; bad men would be worſe, and many of thoſe who are now in the intereſts of *Virtue*, would fall off to the contrary party; and the few that under all diſcouragements remained ſtill attached to the forlorn cauſe, would be virtuous from a felicity of temper, as *Cicero* obſerves of the

Epicureans, rather than on the ſtrength of principle ?

SECT. XII. The *antediluvian race* are a moſt remarkable inſtance of what may be expected from caſting off all belief of an after ſtate. The leading ſin of that generation of men doth not ſeem to have been *idolatry*, but, by the few hints that are left on record concerning their character, *an utter diſregard of a governing Providence, and a future account*; of both which fundamental principles of Religion they made ſhipwreck together. Into this fatal error, it is moſt probable, they were betrayed by their *longevity*; for, being let alone to follow their inclinations for ſo many hundred years, they concluded that *God had given the earth to the children of men*, ſo as to be retired himſelf from the ſcene of action, and to leave them to make the beſt of this life, ſince they had no other to look for. And why might it not be to give a check to this reigning ſpirit of infidelity in the old world, that *Enoch propheſied of the coming of the Lord with ten thouſands of his ſaints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that were ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they had ungodly committed, and of all their hard ſayings which ungodly ſinners had ſpoken againſt him?* And that he was afterwards tranſlated, without ſeeing death ? After mankind had corrupted them-

themſelves to this degree in their *principles*, we cannot be ſurprized to read that *the earth was filled with violence*, and that *the wickedneſs of man was great* upon it; in other words, that there was an inundation of all manner of crimes and diſorders: though, if the *ſacred hiſtory* had not given us an account of it, we ſhould hardly have thought it poſſible that the deluge of wickedneſs and impiety ſhould have been as univerſal as that of water, with which it was puniſhed; no more than one man and his family being ſaved from the common deſtruction, of the many millions to which mankind muſt, by that time, have encreaſed. In this example we ſee the natural iſſue of infidelity. Infidelity having over-run the earth, is followed with a total and incurable deprivation of manners; and this with the ruin of the vile and degenerate race. This is the *firſt conſideration*. Man would be much more *irregular* and *lawleſs* than he is, without the belief of a Future State. Proceed we now to the next ſtep in this view of things.

SECT. XIII. *Deſtitute of all belief of a world to come after this, man would be a moſt unhappy Being.* Reaſon would not be a privilege, but a torment; not a diſtinction to be gloried in, but deplored; and they who moſt improved their Reaſon, (which, one would think, ſhould be agreeable to the

intention of nature) would only hereby exalt and quicken their ſenſe of the wretched ſtate of being they were doomed to. Whether we ſuppoſe men to be in a proſperous, or calamitous condition, enjoying the good things of life, or ſuffering its evils, as in the former caſe, they would be far from content and happineſs, ſo they would have no allay of their miſery in the latter. Brute creatures, who either think not at all, or have their whole attention confined to the preſent ſenſation, ſuffer death without fearing it; let them be free from pain, and they enjoy life to the very laſt moment of it: but man is otherwiſe formed, he ſees death advancing towards him, while it is yet at a diſtance; he knows that he cannot decline its ſtroke, and muſt therefore expect it with inward horror and trembling. This imagination draws a black cloud over life, which covers the proſpect with a diſmal gloom, that nothing can diſpel but the cheering light of the upper world. And to none is the meditation of death ſo unwelcome as to thoſe who have ſome reaſon to value life for its being furniſhed to their wiſh, with a variety of enjoyments, and embittered with no conſiderable misfortunes. The more happy theſe on other accounts, the more unhappy muſt they be in their knowledge that they muſt die. It is very true, the reflection that *they muſt ſhortly be no more*, would

would be reckoned a very good argument for giving the moſt unbounded looſe to pleaſure, that was conſiſtent with that pleaſure they purſued; not that this reflection itſelf would give a reliſh to their ſenſuality; not that theſe men of pleaſure would care to have the coffin and the winding ſheet, the darkneſs and putrefaction of the grave always before them: theſe are diſagreeable ideas, which they would baniſh out of their minds as much as poſſible; for were death admitted to their entertainments, the roſes would immediately wither, and the wine turn flat and ſower. And therefore, when *Horace* calls upon his companions to indulge to mirth and jollity, becauſe they muſt do it *now or never*; if his meaning was, that, in the midſt of their cups, they ſhould quicken one another with this grave admonition; as great a *maſter of pleaſure* as he paſſes for, he was certainly miſtaken, and could not have put a more unlucky thought into their heads; for what can appear joyous to thoſe who are perpetually poring on their approaching end *? What view the ancient *Egyptians* had, in making the dead their gueſts, is uncertain. The immortality of the ſoul being their *national belief*, it is moſt reaſonable to ſuppoſe,

* Cicero.

poſe, the preſence of the dead was deſigned, not to heighten, but to qualify their joy.

SECT. XIV. If we go on to view life on its darkeſt ſide, and think of the many infelicities to which all are ſubject, and of which ſo large a portion falls to ſome *(few*, it may be, compared with the reſt of mankind, but *a great number*, abſolutely taken) to whom exiſtence is ſo far from a favour, that it would be their wiſdom to throw it up, had they nothing further to look for; what refuge can be found but in the hope of a better life? Without this, it would be natural for thoſe under great diſtreſs, to think themſelves juſtified in bewailing their hard lot, and obliged to the author of their beings for nothing ſo much as having put it in their power to end their troubles when they pleaſed, by a voluntary death; which (ſaith *Pliny* the elder) is the beſt gift that God hath confered on wretched man. How common is ſelf-murther now? How much more common would it be, were men neither ſupported under their afflictions by the conſideration of their being

Proxima deinde tenent moeſti loca, qui ſibi lethum
Inſontes peperere manu, lucemq; peroſi
Projecere animas. Quàm vellent æthere in alto
Nunc & pauperiem, & duros perferre labores!
Virg. Æneid. l. 6

ing only intended for the trial of their patience, the correcting their evil inclinations, and the encreaſe of their reward; nor with-held from making their eſcape by the fear of exchanging their preſent miſeries for ſtill greater, and more hopeleſs in a Future State? I would recommend it to thoſe who labour to weaken the evidence for a Future State, among many other ill conſequences of their notion, to reflect on this.

SECT. XV. *Lucretius* celebrates his hero for having routed thoſe gloomy phantoms which till then had held mankind under a ſuperſtitious bondage. Now allowing *Epicurus* the glory of his pretended diſcoveries, and ſuppoſing his doctrine of no-exiſtence after death to be in poſſeſſion of univerſal credit, what would be the bleſſed conſequence? Men would be haunted no more with the dread of another life: and, let it be added, neither would they have the hope of it to encourage and animate them. All the benefit would be to the vicious part of the ſpecies, the great diſturbers of human ſociety; as to whom, it is for the intereſt of the world that they ſhould never be delivered from their terrors; while the good would loſe one of their principal motives to their being ſo, *viz.* the pleaſure they take in the expectation of a happineſs which an ill-natured, or ſtill

changing world, and a crazy or ungovernable body conſpire to keep them out of here. And the further perſons were advanced above the level of beaſts, and the greater the progreſs they had made in knowledge and virtue, the greater in proportion would be their unhappineſs, having no hope of that which they cannot but ardently deſire at the ſame time that they are ſuppoſed not to believe it. They would in this caſe be neceſſarily unhappy, and the more unhappy the leſs they deſerved it. Whereas in the inſtances of thoſe whom the proſpect of a Future State renders uneaſy, their uneaſineſs commonly ariſes from a wrong uſe of their liberty. Did they behave as they ought to do, they would readily acknowledge the hope of another life to be worth more than all the enjoyments of the preſent. Upon the whole; we ſee that ſhould men believe this to be their only life, *all* would be unhappy; the *wicked*, becauſe they could not but abhor the loſs of this life, though fearleſs of any other, and *good men* yet more than they. But of thoſe that believe a Future State, excepting a few under the dominion of melancholy, none are burthened with this belief, but ſuch as neglect a due preparation for that State, which is their own fault, and merits the diſquietude that attends it.

SECT.

SECT. XVI. Now the matter ſtanding thus, that the belief of a Future State is of ſo great neceſſity and importance to mankind, and the belief of the contrary ſo great a prejudice, the argument from hence turns on the following queſtion, *Whether it be, or be not, the will of God that men ſhould entertain the belief of a life to come?* That it cannot be his will that they ſhould diſbelieve any after-ſtate, (beſides what hath been offered elſewhere) this conſideration alone doth abundantly prove, that then he muſt be perfectly indifferent about the growth of evils againſt which he had made no proviſion, and regardleſs of what the *worſt* men did, or the *beſt* ſuffered; a ſuppoſition not to be made concerning the wiſe and gracious Governor of the world. But, on the other hand, if God would have men to embrace and cheriſh the opinion of a future exiſtence, unqueſtionably this opinion cannot be falſe; unleſs we will ſay, that the ſupreme Being governs the world by *a lie*; having no other rewards for the virtuous but deluſive hopes, and fantaſtick pleaſures, and no puniſhments for the wicked but terrors that are altogether chimerical and vain. And who dares to ſay this that ſeriouſly believes the world to have a Governor? Eſpecially, when there is reaſon to think that the Governor of the world could have as effectually attained the ſame

ſame end in a way more conſiſtent with the honour of his attributes; as for inſtance, by enduing the human ſpecies with a lower degree of underſtanding, more temperate deſires and paſſions, and benevolent inclinations, by which all theſe inconveniences had been prevented, without having recourſe to a falſhood, which therefore be it far from any man to impute to his Maker.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the univerſality *of this belief; how occaſioned, and what we are to argue from it.*

SECT. I. THERE is no principle that hath taken deeper root in the human mind, and prevailed more, than the *exiſtence of a Deity.* And yet as wide as this principle hath ſpread, it hath hardly met with a more general reception than the notion of a life after this. It hath been affirmed by ſome travellers, that there are people among whom no traces are to be found of this fundamental truth, that *there is a God*; while others, who pretend to have been more exact in their enquiries, deny it; as, indeed, they have the *reaſon of the thing*, if not *obſervation*, on their ſide. But however that be, I am perſuaded we may very ſafely aſſert, that where-ever the belief and worſhip of a God have been eſtabliſhed, the expectation of rewards and puniſhments after death hath been ever joined with them. In this the new-found world agrees with the old, and later time with the remoteſt antiquity.

SECT. II. *Homer* is ſo full of hints and paſſages that ſuppoſe the ſeparate exiſtence of human

human ſouls, that there can be little doubt of its being the received opinion of the age he lived in. In his *invocation* of the *Muſe*, he diſtinguiſhes between the undaunted ſouls of his heroes ſent to *Hades*, and that part of them which was left to be devoured by dogs, and birds of prey. *Tully* takes notice of this univerſal agreement of mankind, and the parallel, in this reſpect, between their apprehenſions on this article, and that of the exiſtence of a Deity; arguing, that the conſent of all nations in any point is to be regarded as a law, or dictate, of nature. *That* there are gods (ſaith he) we *naturally* believe; *what* they are, *Reaſon* muſt inform us; ſo, *that* ſouls do not ceaſe to exiſt, we are led to believe by the conſent of all nations; in *what ſeats* they reſide, and what ſort of beings they are, is to be learnt from *Reaſon*; the ignorance of which gave riſe to the fables which were grafted on this belief, and are by wiſe men juſtly deſpiſed. From his manner of expreſſion, it is plain that he thought both theſe principles to be as it were *innate* to the mind; *hæc ſentimus natura duce, nulla ratione, nullaque doctrina**; "Our ſentiments here are derived from pure "nature; not from any reaſoning of our "own, or inſtruction of others."

SECT. III. And, indeed, before this prevailing belief of a Future State can be admitted for a diſtinct and immediate argument of

* Tuſc. Quæſt. l. i. ſ. 13, 15, 16.

of its certainty, it must be supposed, or shewn, to be an *anticipation of nature*; or, in other words, it must be proved that God formed the mind with a strong bias or inclination to to the belief of its own immortality; which inclination, as soon as the man is capable of thinking about these things, immediately exerts itself in the actual belief of a future life, independent of *Education*, and the desire of living beyond the grave, and antecedently to all reasoning upon the subject. And, provided this be made good, the argument from hence will want nothing to compleat it; for if God, as *the author of nature*, was the immediate author of this belief, he must have laid himself thereby, as by a kind of promise, under an obligation to verify it. If, on the contrary, this belief be not founded in a prepossession strictly natural, it cannot, in my judgment, pass for a separate proof: and that there is any such anticipation (though it be what I am satisfied in) is a thing not easy to prove to one that denies it, and will assign it to some other cause. But then, such a one will get little by this concession, since the cause to be fixed on must either be *Tradition*, or the *Evidence* of the arguments for a Future State, which lie level to all capacities.

SECT. IV. Shall we rest it on the foot of *Tradition*? The fact I am ready to grant, that there hath been a universal and uncontrouled

trouled *Tradition* in this matter. Before we are capable of making this inquiry concerning our future exiſtence; before we could have the leaſt thought of ſuch a ſtate, if we were left entirely to ourſelves, we commonly have this moſt uſeful principle inſtilled into our minds by our parents, or other perſons who have the care of our *Education*. They do, as it were, draw the curtain, and open the ſcene to our minds. And by this means, the thoughts of another world mingling with our firſt thoughts, and taking full poſſeſſion of us, we are, for the moſt part, as well perſuaded of its reality, as if the notion had been originally and properly ſtamped on our minds by the hand of God himſelf, according to the opinion of ſome men. And as we learn this important leſſon concerning a Future State from our parents, ſo they received it from theirs; nor, if we trace this matter backward, ſhall we ever come to a generation of men who were the firſt inventors of this notion, but following the hiſtory of ancient times, we ſhall be conducted to the firſt parents of our race, who were, moſt probably, *taught of God.*

SECT. V. Any other *Tradition* than this, *ſuppoſed to have been firſt ſet on foot by politicians and lawgivers*, can neither be reconciled with the earlieſt accounts of time, nor with the reaſon of the thing. For, when it was begun, how came it to ſpread from one nation to another till it had made a conqueſt

queſt of all parts of the earth? Did the ſeveral clans of mankind meet, and conſult together, and at laſt frame a creed by the majority of votes? But who ſhould manage the negotiation; and in what method, and by what ſteps could it be carried on, and perfected? And, as for a *Tradition* deduced from the fountains of the human race, whoever acknowledge that, muſt be obliged in conſequence of it, to admit the truth of the doctrine which hath been thus delivered down from the firſt original of things.

SECT. VI. It may be thought that this *Tradition* is no proof but to thoſe who are acquainted with the *Moſaick* hiſtory of the *Creation*. But the contrary may be eaſily ſhewn. Such a *Tradition* there hath been for many ages, at leaſt. And when did it commence? If with the human race, the heads of which are ſuppoſed to have been created by God, the point is decided. If ſince, the difficulty, before-mentioned, returns, of conceiving a way in which it became ſo univerſal. Should it be further ſuggeſted, in order to depretiate the other arguments of a Future State, that *Tradition* is the ſole original of this belief, and that *Reaſon* would never have taught men any ſuch thing; the anſwer is ready at hand, that the ſame objection might as well be ſtarted in reference to the belief of a God, which every man firſt receives from *Education*.

tion. Whether, and how ſoon, men, ſuppoſed to have been bred up in an utter ignorance of theſe things, would have formed a notion of them by the exerciſe of their reaſoning faculty, is a queſtion perfectly looſe, and detached from the preſent diſpute. Upon the ſame ſuppoſition of perſons not having their minds at all cultivated by *Education*, there are a thouſand other things which they would have no apprehenſion of, the truth and uſefulneſs of which, nevertheleſs, after they have been propoſed to them by others, they are capable of demonſtrating. The validity of the proofs brought for the truth of any propoſition doth not depend on the manner in which we were led firſt to think of it. What we believe firſt through the force of *Education* we may afterwards believe upon the teſtimony of *Reaſon.* And they who know what it is to reaſon right, may be as certain whether they do ſo or no; and, if they have a mind to it, may judge as impartially of the arguments produced, as if they had not imbibed the notion from *Education.* Otherwiſe, we ſhould never be able to rely on the truth of our faculties, and the integrity of our judgment, but in things which contradicted the received belief; in which we have moſt ground to ſuſpect our being deceived.

SECT. VII. It is further certain that in caſe this belief had no other baſis but *Education,*

cation, ſo that *Education* did not coincide with the natural notions of mens minds, nor was ſupported by any rational arguments for a Future State, we ſhould not find it ſo impoſſible to throw off this belief, and much leſs would the underſtanding approve it, and acquieſce in it, as it now does. And for ought I know, the general agreement of mankind in the belief of another life beſides this, when thus imployed to back and ſecond other arguments, will be of as much uſe as if made a diſtinct evidence, by being reſolved into an *anticipation of nature*, becauſe, as ſuch, it cannot lend the ſame aſſiſtance to the reſt.

SECT. VIII. Some will not allow this univerſal belief to proceed immediately from *Nature*. We will ſuppoſe it does not, but from *Tradition*. Yet as this *Tradition* could not have grown univerſal, if there had been a time when the nations of the earth were without all belief of a Future State, and was therefore *from the beginning*, and therefore probably ſet on foot by the order of God himſelf; ſo, let it begin *when*, and ſpread *how*, you pleaſe, yet it could not have kept its ground, and endured in the ſtrength and vigour it hath done, not only gaining the *affections of the heart* (as every principle of Education, true or falſe, is apt to do) but the *approbation of the underſtanding*, if it had not been countenanced and enforced by arguments from Reaſon, of ſo great plainneſs and

evidence, that all mankind have been ſenſible of the force of them.

SECT. IX. Others will have this propoſition, that there are future rewards and puniſhments, to be an *innate principle*; either ſtrictly ſuch, being imprinted on the mind, or leſs properly, as *Nature* is framed with a diſpoſition to fall in with it upon the firſt propoſal; and that this impreſſion of *Nature* will fully account for the univerſality of this belief. Let it be ſo. But then the other arguments for a Future State will be left to ſtand more upon their own legs, without the additional ſtrength they would otherwiſe receive from this conſideration, that they have, in fact, appeared ſo evident to mankind, as to obtain the aſſent of all people, of every climate, character, and degree of underſtanding, and to be the chief ground of the univerſality and conſtancy of this traditional belief.

SECT. X. If there be a third ſort, who join *Nature* and *Tradition*, but will leave nothing to the force of the arguments from *Reaſon*, pretending they have no weight at all in them, they are certainly in the wrong, becauſe, notwithſtanding this conſpiring influence of *Nature* and *Tradition*, we are not ſo blinded and prejudiced by them, but we are able to judge whether an argument be concluſive, or no; and finding, after the moſt exact ſcrutiny, that there are many ſuch ar-

arguments, which reflect a light upon one another, we have reason to think these arguments likewise have contributed their part to the universality of this belief of a Future State, and to fix it deeper in the minds of men.

CHAP. VII.

Future Rewards *discoverable from the light of Reason, notwithstanding the* imperfection of human Virtue.

SECT. I. THE Author of a late Discourse concerning the *impossibility of proving a Future State by the light of nature*, before mentioned, fancies he hath at once disabled all the arguments for another life, in which a visible distinction shall be made between the virtuous and vicious part of mankind, by this short reply, that these arguments for future rewards "*will not hold* "*good as to such creatures as men now are,* "*who have sinned and come short of the glory* "*of God; but only when they concern crea-* "*tures that are innocent and perfectly holy.*" Having granted the fact on which this Author builds his reasoning, that *there is no man who liveth and sinneth not*, I will take the liberty to say, that notwithstanding this degeneracy of human nature, the evidence for a Future State of Rewards, where every man, that is not inexcusably wanting to himself, shall injoy a happiness suitable to the nature which God hath given him, and correspondent to the degree of his sincere, though imperfect goodness, appears to me to subsist, not at all, or not considerably, diminished in

in its force. My reaſon is, that a *ſtate of innocence* not being, and never having been, in our power, the wiſdom and goodneſs of God will not allow us to ſuppoſe, he would make this, which is *morally impoſſible*, the condition of his favour and acceptance.

SECT. II. I believe none who hold the opinion of *immediate creation* will deny the ſoul to be pure and upright when firſt put into the body; but then, this ſoul, though created with an entire rectitude in all its powers, is from its firſt entrance into the body, or rather into the world, beſieged by the objects of ſenſe, which ſooth and taint the imagination, excite and engage the paſſions, and, by the help of theſe ſeducers, poſſeſs the ſoul with early and ſtrong prejudices in favour of a ſenſual and worldly felicity. A vicious, or at beſt, defective, education, prevailing errors, and the numerous examples of vice, conſpire to ſpread and encreaſe the evil; inſomuch that, by the time *Reaſon* is capable of making any ſtand againſt *Nature*, it finds the ſoul more than half-conquered by thoſe violent inclinations, which are continually tempting, and, unleſs firmly reſiſted, hurrying it into the paths of ſin. Theſe inclinations, indeed, are not ſo ſtrong as to be abſolutely ungovernable; but then, on the other hand, they are too ſtrong to be entirely expelled, or kept from making occaſional incurſions on our innocence. All this is fore-

ſeen by our Creator, who yet judges fit to ſend the ſoul into the body: I aſk, *With what view?* Is it with a deſign of advancing it to a better ſtate, after its time of trial is ended, but on *this condition only*, that it preſerve itſelf perfectly ſound and healthy in the midſt of contagion, and, whilſt it walks in ſlippery places, never actually ſlides? But this is ſuch a deſign as God knows *will* never ſucceed, ſo much as in a ſingle inſtance; we may juſtly ſay, *cannot*; and is therefore unworthy the majeſty of the ſupreme Being to propoſe. This ſuppoſition not being defenſible, will it be ſaid, that the deſign of God in this act of his Providence was, that the ſoul might have an opportunity to make itſelf miſerable hereafter, but not the leaſt chance for a ſtate of happineſs? A moſt glorious and amiable ſcheme of divine Providence towards the children of men! Which I leave thoſe that can to reconcile, I do not ſay with infinite goodneſs, but with any goodneſs at all. From hence I infer, that the choice before us is not *annihilation* or *miſery*, but either all men have *the ſame* dark and gloomy proſpect of *annihilation*, or mankind have *different* proſpects of *happineſs* or *miſery*, as virtue or vice is their predominant character.

SECT. III. Againſt the *annihilation* of all men, without diſtinction, *Reaſon* loudly reclaims, as a thing utterly inconſiſtent with the *wiſdom* of God to continue a race of creatures,

creatures, only to act the same follies over again, one generation after another; or to make the same fruitless essays towards the attainment of virtue and felicity, with impatient desires after them, and vast and excellent capacities for them, but desires that shall never be accomplished, capacities that shall never be filled. Much more doth *Reason* declare against this hypothesis as incompatible with the same *wisdom*, considered in its governing character. For though *justice* doth not oblige the Creator and Governor of the world to bestow *any* rewards which he hath not *promised* (no not on his innocent creatures) much less *eternal* ones; yet surely *wisdom* (some would say *justice*, but I think, not so properly) is concerned to see that in the distribution of the advantages and disadvantages of being, the lovers of virtue do not, upon the whole, fare worse than its enemies; or the most eminent among the virtuous meet with least encouragement. But now, whether there be any such proportion and adjustment of rewards, as this, in the present life, any one may satisfy himself on the least observation. This, I take it, makes the argument unanswerable against the *annihilation of all*, good and bad.

SECT. IV. But when it is further added, that God is a Being of infinite *goodness*, Reason is still more positive that he cannot proceed with his creatures after this manner, saying,

Return ye children of men to your firſt nothing, thoſe of you whoſe aim is to pleaſe me, as well as others. Would a good God place millions of innocent ſouls in ſuch circumſtances, that they can never reaſonably hope to be happy, merely becauſe they do not atchieve impoſſibilities; when, in more favourable circumſtances, where the balance betwixt virtue and vice hung only *equal* till Reaſon came to be capable of making a free choice, theſe very ſouls might have preſerved their innocence? This proves that if God had not judged it proper to make his creatures happy on any other terms than thoſe of perfect obedience, and perſevering innocence, his goodneſs is ſuch, that he would have put them in an agreeable ſituation for this purpoſe, that happineſs might not be an impoſſible acquiſition.

SECT. V. I cannot forbear obſerving, in this place, the inconſiſtency of this Gentleman's opinion, with his own way of reaſoning. His *opinion* (as far as I can gather it from the general title of the *Diſcourſe* and and ſeveral paſſages in it) is this, that *Reaſon, without Revelation, does not lead men to believe there is any Future State at all; the good and bad alike, after death, paſſing into a ſtate of non-exiſtence, for any thing we can prove from the light of nature to the contrary.* His *reaſon* why future rewards are not to be expected by *any* men, is that *all have ſinned.*

Here

Here I have to remark, that if this reaſon againſt a Future State of rewards be good, it evidently proves, without the light of Revelation, a Future State of *Puniſhment*. It muſt be the *holineſs* of God, or his diſpleaſure againſt ſin, if any thing, that makes it reaſonable to think he will annihilate the moſt virtuous ſouls, becauſe they are not perfectly innocent. But from the ſame *holineſs* we may conclude much more ſtrongly for the wicked's being puniſhed in an after life; ſince the calamities of this, of which they have many times the leaſt ſhare, are no indication at all of the peculiar diſpleaſure of God againſt them. Or, we may argue backward, that the annihilation of the moſt profligate ſinners (proſperous, it may be, to the laſt) being ſuppoſed, God's paſſing over all their provocations ſo ſlightly, may juſtly encourage the humble confidence of ſincere ſouls, that their unallowed failings, and ſins which they have forſaken, ſhall not be imputed to them, ſo far as to exclude them from all advantage by their virtue after death.

SECT. VI. I muſt beg leave for another remark on *two paſſages* of this *Author*, which lie ſo near together, that I am ſurprized they did not appear ſhocking to himſelf. One of them is; "I cannot perceive how this argument (*viz.* from *man's being plainly in his nature an accountable creature, and capable of being judged*) can prove that the *worſt*

" *worſt* of men ſhall be puniſhed in a Future " State, *p.* 265." The word *worſt* is, in his own book, printed in a different character, which I the rather take notice of, becauſe it helps to make the boldneſs of the expreſſion more remarkable, and the abſurdity of the notion more glaring. The other paſſage is in the ſame page; " that there ſhall be a day " of judgment at the end of the world, " wherein the Lord Jeſus ſhall judge all " mankind, and ſentence all that have ſin- " cerely believed in, and obeyed him, to " eternal life and happineſs in the new *Jeru-* " *ſalem*, and (*obſerve*) condemn the deſpiſers " of his Perſon and Grace, to everlaſting " miſery and torments, is as certain to me " from the expreſs revelation of the Goſpel, " as any truth whatſoever." The expreſſion of being *accountable* plainly implies that mankind are dependent upon God, and obliged to him, and capable of knowing this, and of acting agreeably (eſpecially being joined with the words, *capable of being judged*) and that, therefore, if they do not act thus ſuitably to their nature and obligations, but, inſtead of this, fly in the face of their Sovereign and Benefactor, which, ſurely, is done by the *worſt* of men, they muſt expect to give an account of their behaviour, and, without repentance, to be puniſhed for it in a *Future State*. Whoever ſays, *no*; but that an *eternal ſleep*, to which they are condemned, in company

pany with the *beſt* of men, who have lived without a Revelation, may be a ſufficient puniſhment, muſt look upon the guilt of ſuch a conduct, which yet makes them the *worſt* of men, as very ſmall and inconſiderable. And when the guilt of the *worſt* of men, acting in defiance of the *light of Nature*, and all the diſcoveries of divine goodneſs in *Creation* and *Providence*, perhaps, to them ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing, is ſo ſmall and trivial, how comes the guilt of all who live under the *Goſpel*, and do not come up to the terms of it, to ſwell to that terrible ſize as to *deſerve* their being *condemned to everlaſting miſery and torments? Deſerve* this, I ſay; for, I ſuppoſe, they will not be condemned to them without deſerving to be ſo. May we not conceive, that among the deſpiſers of the Perſon and Grace of Jeſus Chriſt (in which number, I take it for granted, he comprehends all wicked impenitent Chriſtians, who neglect that great ſalvation which is offered to them) there may be ſome, whoſe caſe is attended with ſuch alleviating circumſtances, that their guilt does not, upon the whole, exceed that of the *worſt* of men under the *diſpenſation of nature?* And the guilt being (we will only ſay) equal, muſt *one* man have nothing worſe to apprehend than *annihilation*, while for *another* there remaineth a *certain fearful expectation of judgment*, and miſery without end? I doubt, we muſt then ſay, that the ſeverity of the

Goſpel-

Goſpel-Diſpenſation is not leſs than its goodneſs. To proceed;

SECT. VII. I deſire to be informed, what can induce a wiſe and good God to confer happineſs on his creatures, but their being qualified for it, according to the ſtate and condition aſſigned them? And wherein does this qualification for happineſs conſiſt, but in true virtue? Or what is virtue but the love of God and our duty, and a prevailing determination of the Will to pleaſe the one, and perform the other; and to perform it for this very reaſon, that we ſhall herein pleaſe God? Now if this love of God, and univerſal goodneſs, this determination of the Will to what is juſt and reaſonable, may be ſtronger in a Being, that through the violence, the ſurprize, or importunity of temptation, and the imperfect light by which he is guided, is ſometimes carried aſide from the rule preſcribed him, than in another, who, meeting with little or no oppoſition in his own frame, or the world about him, and bleſſed with clearer diſcoveries of the divine Will, goes on in a ſtrait courſe; I ſay, if this may be ſuppoſed, (as I do not ſee why it may not) it will follow that the former, in reſpect of the temper and habit of his mind, is, to ſay the leaſt, as well qualified for the enjoyment of happineſs as the latter; and, if qualified, or prepared for it, what ſhould hinder his injoying it? It may be anſwered; why, thoſe ſins and

and tranſgreſſions he is guilty of, for which his repentance is no proper ſatisfaction. Very true; it is not; yet ſince it is the beſt the creature hath to offer, and the errors he is drawn into through weakneſs, and in his unguarded moments, do not deſtroy the habits of virtue, it may be concluded that repentance, in ſuch caſes at leaſt, ſhall be accepted; if not for its own ſake, and in a way of abſolute goodneſs in God, yet upon ſome conſideration or other known to God, and by him judged ſufficient to vindicate the honour of his government.

SECT. VIII. This *reaſoning* is very much favoured by ſeveral *indications*, which we meet with in ourſelves, and in the diſpenſations of Providence, of the kind and favourable thoughts of God towards us, even *thoughts of peace, and not of evil.* In ourſelves we find *a ſenſe of good and evil*, which, becauſe no man is without it, we juſtly conclude to have been created in us by God himſelf; and is therefore called *natural Conſcience.* The *Heathens* have ſpoken of Conſcience as that which makes a man happy, or miſerable, and deſcribed its different workings in the moſt lively characters; as perſons not unacquainted with the thing they diſcourſed of. And what is the language of thoſe hopes and joys which are the offspring of a *good Conſcience?* For I am now conſidering theſe only, and not the terrors and anxieties of an *evil one.* Is it not

not the ſame as that of God to *Cain*, *If thou doſt well ſhalt thou not be accepted?* When Conſcience abſolves, is it not authoritatively? When it ſpeaks peace, is it not in the name of God? Is not this preſent ſatisfaction an earneſt of ſome other, and greater reward? There is a pleaſure attends every good action; and, much more, a courſe of ſuch actions; when virtue and goodneſs are become *habitual*, they produce an unſpeakable calm in the ſoul, and eſtabliſh it againſt all the aſſaults of outward evils. Should it be ſuggeſted, that *theſe men have their reward*; my anſwer is, that if it be their only reward, and in the next life they are to be miſerable, notwithſtanding all this appearance of a reconciliation between God and them, the pleaſures of Conſcience which they at preſent feel will prove to be deceitful, and have the effect, which other pleaſing deceptions have, to make them more unhappy afterwards; better not have theſe pleaſures, ſince they only enſnare them into falſe and deluſive hopes, and give the greater ſting to their future miſery, by its coming unexpected.

SECT. IX. But the teſtimony of a good Conſcience, and the inward confidence and rejoicing ariſing from it, prove more than this bare *negative*, that *future miſery is not the unavoidable portion of mankind who are without a Revelation*; we are from hence authorized to conclude that their Maker hath

deſigned

designed them for a state of happiness, to which they shall certainly attain if they do not displease, and counter-act *the author of their beings*. The pleasures of a mind, conscious to its own integrity, are the blossoms of this happiness, and as plainly promise it, as the blossoms in spring do the fruits of the summer. Sincerity gives a man great boldness and assurance, and prompts him to look forward to a time when this private witness in his own bosom shall be ratified with the approbation of his supreme Judge, which he will declare by some visible and determinate marks of his favour. Otherwise, I cannot see what occasion there is for so much joy in reflecting on a life of virtue, unless it be for the influence which such a life hath upon our present happiness; but as this happiness is inconsiderable, and the influence of virtue upon it is still less, the joy derived from hence would be next to none.

SECT. X. Another thing which cannot have escaped the observation of those who have any knowledge of human nature, is the *inclination to hope* which in the generality of mankind is exceeding strong and remarkable. The structure of their hopes is no sooner thrown to the ground, but they build it up again, as high and towering as ever; their hopes subsist amidst disappointments, and grow out of misery itself. And what is it that these hopes, being interpreted, teach

us? Plainly this, that we are yet in a mutable ſtate, that we may become happy, if we do not make ourſelves miſerable, that our caſe is not hopeleſs, becauſe then we ourſelves ſhould be the ſame. The *Author* of *Nature* intended that thou ſhouldſt hope; elſe he would not have framed thy nature as he hath done; he further intended, that thou ſhouldſt put thy hope and truſt in him, becauſe, on the contrary ſuppoſition, he would not have given thee ſuch a diſpoſition to hope in general. Can it be thought that God would ſo twiſt the paſſion of hope with the human heart, that it cannot eaſily be tore from thence, and lay us under a neceſſity of fixing our hope on ſome object or other, and at the ſame time forbid us all hope of his favour, of the pardon of our ſins, and final happineſs? I muſt own, this to me appears altogether incredible. The hope of happineſs is invincible, therefore natural; but experience ſhews, that the hope of happineſs in and from this world is the greateſt folly: from this ſeeming contradiction there is no geting clear, but by ſuppoſing *a ſtate of happineſs beyond death*, to the purſuit and hope of which we are conducted by our diſappointments themſelves. The hope of an earthly felicity is only a miſapplication of the natural paſſion, for want of laying that and our experience together, and then reaſoning upon them. As another abuſe of the natural paſſion would be,

be, to hope for the happineſs of the future world, without taking the method which *Reaſon* preſcribes for obtaining it. *Nature* bids us hope; without all doubt, therefore, there is ſufficient ground for hope; but not, whether we act *right* or *wrong*. Being reaſonable and free agents, ſomething is expected from us by way of qualification for the happineſs we hope for. And what that is, every man's *Reaſon*, where there is no *Revelation*, muſt inform him; and therefore, if men conſult not with *Reaſon* in this matter, and much more if they knowingly contradict it, their hopes of happineſs hereafter, without changing the courſe of life they are in, muſt be very unreaſonable.

SECT. XI. *The goodneſs of God to mankind in the diſpenſations of his Providence* brings us directly to the ſame concluſion. The goodneſs of God's *Providence*, proclaims the goodneſs of his nature; and from the goodneſs of his nature we may be confident, that he is not *kind to all*, only that his bleſſings may be ſnares to them; for this would not be *goodneſs*, but ſomething worſe than *ſeverity*; or to ſignify, that this is the utmoſt that any of them have to expect from him. When he ſhowers down his favours on a ſinful world, guides the ſeaſons, bleſſes the earth with encreaſe, makes the good in moſt mens lives to preponderate

the evil, God does as it were addreſs himſelf to the children of men, and ſay, "You "ſee here, I am not averſe to a reconcilia- "tion; you have by your evil works deſerved "that I ſhould paſs ſentence upon you, and "and I have done it ſo far as to determine "that *if you repent not, you ſhall periſh*; "but I have not yet executed the ſentence; "I am not willing to execute it; I on pur- "poſe ſuſpend the execution, that you may "have time to turn unto me, and *by my* "*goodneſs be led to repentance.*" This is *the voice of God in his Providence*, as we are directed to underſtand it by the *Scripture* itſelf.

And now, ſuppoſing that men do repent, and return to a better mind, what will be the conſequence? Only, that God will continue, and enlarge his temporal favours to them? This cannot be the deſign; ſince there is no ſuch connection between *repentance* and *worldly proſperity*, as between the *means* and the *end*. There are thoſe who grow worſe for the favours of heaven, and yet injoy them ſtill; others are brought to repentance and amendment of life, either by afflictions or mercies; but have not their afflictions hereupon removed, or their proſperity eſtabliſhed, and encreaſed. Wherefore, it is not more certain, that the manifeſtations of God's goodneſs in his providential dealings with the

the children of men are intended to lead them to repentance, than it is, that their repentance, attended with a ſuitable life, will prepare them for better rewards, and ſuch as are more agreeable to the nature of moral goodneſs, than any which this world affords.

CHAP. VIII.

Revelation *neither affirms, or ſuppoſes, any thing which* enervates, *much leſs, which* quite deſtroys *the arguments for future recompences from the* light of Nature.

SECT. I. AT the ſame time that I contend for the certainty of a Future State on the *principles of Reaſon*, being well perſuaded of the truth of the *Chriſtian Revelation*, I cannot ſuppoſe that this *Revelation* does really, in any part of it, contradict the notion I have been endeavouring to eſtabliſh. And that it does not, will, I preſume, be manifeſt when the following obſervations are duly conſidered, by the help of which the difficulties and objections alledged from Scripture will admit of an eaſy anſwer.

SECT. II. *Obſ.* 1. *Reaſon cannot plainly dictate one thing to thoſe who have no other rule to go by, and Revelation the direct contrary, concerning the ſame perſons, to others.* Now this one thing, which Reaſon leads all thoſe to believe who are under no other guidance but her's, is a ſtate of recompences after death. And Reaſon aſſuring them of this, which is the only inſtructor they have, it either teacheth them nothing but truth, or they labour under an *invincible*

cible error. That the latter cannot be ſuppoſed, without impeaching the veracity and goodneſs of God, was ſhewn before; and therefore the former muſt be admitted. And what is once true muſt be ſo for ever. No ſupervening Revelation can alter it. *Revelation* cannot tell the *Chriſtian* that the *Heathens* had no grounds to believe a Future State, when the *ſame Heathens* were told by their own *Reaſon* that they had. They who at once injoy both Reaſon and Revelation, are, by the advice of Reaſon itſelf, obliged to put themſelves under the conduct of Revelation as the *ſurer guide*; and therefore, on the teſtimony of Revelation, may believe ſome things to be true or falſe, contrary to what they appear to Reaſon, judging by her own light and principles; provided Reaſon be more certain of the truth and meaning of the Revelation than it is of the truth or falſhood of the things in queſtion. But what is this to men who have only Reaſon afforded them, and are to be determined by that, or by nothing? They muſt follow their only guide, and as long as they do ſo, cannot go wrong. If the *heathen world* might be led wrong by *Reaſon*, why not the *chriſtian world* by *Revelation?* It being no more inconſiſtent with the perfections of God to deceive us one way than another.

SECT. III. But may not Revelation ſhew that *not* to be Reaſon which had long been taken for ſuch? Undoubtedly it may; and hath in fact done it, in regard of the many errors and ſuperſtitions of the *pagan Religion*. But then, this is not done by barely *aſſerting* the Heathens to have gone aſtray, but by *enlightning our minds* after ſuch a manner with the knowledge of the truth, that we clearly *diſcern* their miſtakes, and that theſe miſtakes were of ſuch a nature that they could not have fallen into them *at firſt*, nor have afterwards continued in them, if they had not moſt inexcuſably neglected the uſe of *their own Reaſon*. They ſtifled this divine ſpark, and ſet up imagination in the room of it; and it is no wonder that, confounding imagination with Reaſon, they miſtook imaginary Deities for the true God. Thus it is in reference to thoſe things which had their original from Reaſon and Wiſdom *falſely ſo called*; the truth being ſet before us in its native light, we are convinced of the abſurdity of theſe things, and of their having had their birth from the corruption of the human underſtanding, and heart. As to the notion of a Future State, it is much otherwiſe; this hath prevailed among all mankind, and among them moſt, who have lived, and reaſoned beſt. And not only the thing itſelf is confirmed by Revelation, but the *rational*

tional proofs of it, since the understandings of men were purified and enlarged by this supernatural light, have been more clearly stated, and strongly defended, than they ever were before; and we perceive that the belief of future recompences, according to mens real characters, which obtained among the Heathens, was as agreeable to Reason, as many other things, believed by them, were contrary to it; which is next to demonstration, that it is not an empty unreal image of Reason, but the very thing itself, that men follow in entertaining the belief of a life to come.

SECT. IV. *Obs.* 2. *Revealed Religion cannot teach any such doctrines as are subversive of Natural; because this latter is the foundation which the former stands upon.* But the doctrine of no-evidence for a Future State of Rewards and Punishments does immediately overthrow all Natural Religion, and cannot therefore be a doctrine of Revelation. No Future State, no obligations to the duties of Natural Religion, or none that will be regarded. Let us therefore suppose there had been no Religion of any kind in the world for some thousands of years, excepting in one little corner of it, no worship of the Deity, no expectations from him, and that *Jesus Christ* at his coming into the world had found it in this condition. What would have been the reception of a person who

pretended to come from heaven in order to inſtruct men in the way thither? And how would they have reaſoned upon this extraordinary phænomenon? Would they not have thought it very ſtrange that the conduct of Providence towards creatures of the ſame ſpecies ſhould be ſo exceeding different and unequal, that one part of it ſhould die like the *beaſts*, another partake of immortality with *ſuperior beings*? That the Governor of the Univerſe ſhould have ſhewn ſuch a diſregard of mankind for many ages, how many they knew not, as to leave them without all effectual motives to Virtue and Religion, making no diſtinction between them in this life, according to their different behaviour, nor giving them any good reaſon to think he would ever do it in another; and at laſt ſend *his own Son* to reveal his will to them under the ſanction of eternal Rewards and Puniſhments? This is a ſtrange leap, they might have ſaid, from *no Religion*, to one *ſo pure, ſo ſtrict, and ſo ſublime!* From *no Future State*, to one that is *everlaſting!* We ſhould have had ſome hints, at leaſt, of this matter from our own Reaſon; Natural Religion ſhould have been our *Schoolmaſter* to lead us to a more perfect diſpenſation; and by obſcurer ideas, and fainter hopes, we ſhould have been prepared for thoſe glorious diſcoveries, which, in our preſent circumſtances,

ſtances, do quite overwhelm us, and are too ſurprizing to be credible.

SECT. V. It is true that in fact, the ſtate of the world was not as I have ſuppoſed it. The obligations to Virtue and Religion have been univerſally acknowledged; but the reaſon of that hath been, becauſe the recompences of another life have been univerſally believed; and, by that means, have had ſome influence on the hopes and fears of mankind. But now if theſe hopes and fears were without all foundation in Reaſon, there is no abſurdity in arguing upon the ſuppoſition of mens having been without them, and without that ſenſe of Religion which is built upon them. Nay, and though there was ſuch a thing as *Natural Religion*, (over-grown, indeed, with ſuperſtition) and a foundation for it in the hopes and fears of mankind, before the *Chriſtian Religion* appeared, yet it muſt have been an unſurmountable prejudice againſt the new Religion, if, according to the account which that gave of things, *(viz.* that the hopes and fears of another life, among men deſtitute of Revelation, were entirely imaginary) Religion had till then reſted upon nothing but a falſe imagination; the human race having been abandoned to utter deſtruction for ſome thouſands of years, before a ſcene of immortality was opened to them. Our anceſtors then, if you the preachers of the

Goſpel

Gospel are to be believed, whether they were men of probity and Religion, or infamous for their vices, were under a like necessity of dying, body and soul, for ever, and so had really no encouragement to devote themselves to a life of Religion; while we, who have the same nature they had, and have derived it from them, must, whether we will or no, be immortal, tho' whether it shall be in happiness or misery, is left to our own choice. This objection against the Gospel must have been very obvious, if, as some men pretend, it cut off the whole heathen world, good and bad alike, from all relation to any other life besides this; and that no such objection was ever offered, is a very strong presumption that the Gospel was not apprehended to give any handle for it, by the first converts to it, who were better capable of judging, than we can be, whether it did so or no.

SECT. VI. *Obs.* 3. *The death threatened to* Adam, *was only the death of the body; not of the whole man, body and soul.* The *threatening*, which was intended to prevent the breach of the law, is best explained by the *sentence*, after the law was broken, and the sentence by the *execution. In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, is the threatening; pursuant to which, the sentence is pronounced on fallen man, [a] *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt*

[a] Gen. iii. 19.

ſhalt thou return. Of the execution of which ſentence we have an account, [b] *All the days that* Adam *lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.* He died, and therein ſuffered the puniſhment which the law threatened, and his judge had ſolemnly condemned him to. So far then, we have no reaſon to think that any other death is meant than the death of the body, ſince no other is mentioned either in the ſentence or the execution. And if it be further added, that *Moſes*, who wrote the *hiſtory of the fall*, cannot be ſuppoſed to have intended any thing elſe by the word *death*, than the deſtruction or end of this bodily life; nor the *Jews*, for whoſe uſe he immediately wrote it, to have underſtood it otherwiſe, it will make it highly probable that corporeal death, and no other, was threatened. Now the only, or at leaſt, the moſt direct way to know *Moſes*'s meaning in this expreſſion, and the conſtruction which his readers at that time would put upon it, is to conſider how it is taken in other places of the ſame Writer; for if we meet with the ſame phraſe, and in the ſame Writer, and never ſignifying any thing elſe than the death of the body, for what reaſon ſhould we imagine it to ſignify any other in the firſt threatening, when there is not the leaſt intimation of it in the whole account of that tranſaction? [c] *And* Abimelech *charged his*

[b] Gen. v. 5. [c] Gen. xxvi. 11.

his people, saying, He that toucheth this man, or his wife, shall surely be put to death; where the words in the original are exactly the same, *dying he shall die*, that is, he shall surely die for it. And so *Exod.* xxi. 12, 15, 16, and 17. It is appointed by the law, that whosoever was guilty of the crimes there mentioned, should *surely die:* here again the same phrase is used; as likewise, *Levit.* xx. 2, and 9, and several other verses; and in all these places denotes that death which was to be inflicted by the hand of the Magistrate, *who could only kill the body*, on such sort of malefactors. The conclusion from hence is, that when man is told that *he shall die, if he eat of the forbidden fruit*, we are to understand death in the usual sense of that word; according to which, neither the entire extinction of the soul, nor its everlasting life in misery, is meant; but the period of that life which man enjoys *as man*, that is, as a Being compounded of soul and body, the latter of which is, by death, resolved into its original dust, while the former, on its divorce from its partner, is transmitted into a separate state of existence. This is the ordinary notion of death; the notion that hath been entertained of it by all mankind, in all ages; what the *Jewish Nation* particularly understood by death in *Moses* his time, and consequently is the true and

and full notion of that death which is annexed by way of penalty to the *firſt law.*

SECT. VII. That which ſeems to put this matter out of all doubt, is the *peremptoxineſs* of the threatening. *Thou ſhalt ſurely die*; as ſurely die as thou art now living; nothing can ſave thy life when once it is forfeited; nothing ſhall be accepted in lieu of it; there ſhall be no ſuch pardon of thy ſin as will deliver thee from the neceſſity of ſeeing death and corruption; no releaſe and diſcharge; no; *but thou ſhalt ſurely die*; I ingage the honour of my word for it; and ſooner ſhall heaven and earth paſs away than the leaſt tittle of that ſhall fail. This argument is deciſive; *no more was intended in the threatening than was actually inflicted*; for, in that caſe the threatening would have only ſignified what the *deſert* of ſin would be; which man would have known without the addition of a threatening; not what would be the *certain event*, and ſo would not appear to be very *neceſſary*; which we may not ſay, without reflecting on the wiſdom of God. Where is the wiſdom of doing what is unneceſſary, that is, what might as well be let alone? Or, where was the neceſſity of threatening death, if that threatening, after all, might be ſet aſide? It muſt, at leaſt, be ſaid, that God would have *Adam* think that there would be no poſſibility of eſcaping death, if he ventured to tranſgreſs; and if this

this was the intention of God, that man ſhould expect the certain accompliſhment of the threatening, then God muſt have abſolutely decreed to accompliſh it; the making uſe of falſe hopes and fears in the government of his reaſonable creatures being a thing utterly unworthy of the ſupreme Being.

SECT. VIII. It follows, that the threatening was executed upon our firſt parents; and, if it extended beyond their perſons, ſo as to involve their poſterity in its meaning, is fulfilled in them likewiſe, on good and bad, *Chriſtians*, and *Heathens*, indifferently. All, without exception, die, with regard to the body; and they all *die in* Adam, or upon the account of their relation to him; and, ſhould any thing more than this be meant in the firſt threatening, *Adam* and his deſcendents muſt be ſuppoſed to ſuffer it. This ſhews that *eternal miſery* could not be deſigned by death, becauſe, were death, in this notion of it, *to paſs upon all men*, there could be no room for the redemption of any. Nor the *extinction of the entire Being*, unleſs we will ſay, that all men paſs into a ſtate of non-exiſtence at death, from which God redeems ſuch of them, and upon ſuch terms and conditions, as he pleaſes.

SECT. IX. Perhaps I needed not have taken any pains to prove this, with regard to many of thoſe whoſe notion this is, that

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the death of the whole man was threatened to the first sin; since they seem to allow that death, in this sense of the word, was the actual consequence of *the fall*; all mankind, without distinction, being *totally*, though not *finally*, and *everlastingly*, deprived of their *Being* by death. All men die, after the same manner as it was threatened *Adam* should do, and shall return to life again at the last day. This second life is procured for them by Christ, to the intent, that *as in* Adam *all die, so in Christ should all be made alive.* But then, for want of that perfect righteousness, which alone confers a title to immortality, they must have died a second time for their own sins, as they did the first for the sin of *Adam*, if God, out of his mercy to mankind, had not proposed to the children of men, that as many of them as would believe Jesus his Son to be the Messiah, and receive him for their King and Ruler, should have all their past sins and disobedience forgiven them, and their faith imputed to them for righteousness, and thereby be capable of eternal life. This is Mr. *Locke*'s * scheme in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, as far as I can gather it from his expressions, and from the general drift of that Discourse. According to this scheme, the life of man is wholly extinguished by death, rekindled again at the resurrection,

* Works in Fol. *Vol.* II. p. 519.

ſurrection, and then loſt, *a ſecond time for ever*, by all thoſe who do not believe and obey the Goſpel.

SECT. X. Taking the truth of this opinion for granted, what Mr. *Hallett* affirms cannot be diſputed, that the Scripture builds upon this ſuppoſition, *no Reſurrection, no Future State* *. But then, the *Heathens*, who had no ſuch notion of death, as a *total privation of their Being*, could not ſee the connection betwixt theſe two; and therefore, though they were without the hope of a *Reſurrection*, had no good reaſon to doubt of a *Future State*. Nor, in truth, is there any ſuch connection taught in Scripture, as this which is here pretended, between the reſurrection of the body, and a Future State; the *diſtinct nature* of the ſoul, and its *ſeparate exiſtence*, being plainly delivered in the ſacred writings, as ſhall be ſhewn under the next obſervation. And if the *whole man* doth not *die*, the *whole man* cannot need a *reſurrection*.

SECT. XI. And, indeed, if we ſtrictly examine the notion of the *utter extinction* of the Being, and its *reproduction* after a certain interval of time, it will appear highly abſurd to Reaſon; for, after it hath once ceaſed to exiſt, the ſame *individual*, *thinking Being* can never exiſt more. A new one may be produced exactly like the former,

* Page 324.

mer, and ſo may a *thouſand* more; but that will not make them all to be the ſame Being; as it would do, for the ſame reaſon as any one of them may be the ſame with *that* which had an end put to its exiſtence, ſome time ago; whether a longer, or a ſhorter, makes no difference. After there hath been a gap, or ſeparating ſpace of time, nothing can poſſibly unite the Being exiſting before, and that which exiſts after, into *one*. And this alone, to thoſe who believe a Reſurrection, may be inſtead of a thouſand arguments of the ſoul's not dying with the body; becauſe in that caſe the Reſurrection would not be barely *refitting up the body*, that it might be united to *the ſame conſcious principle*, with which it was in union before, (and which had never for a moment ceaſed to exiſt, and ſo might have a title to be rewarded or puniſhed, for what was done in a former body), but *producing another conſcious principle*; new as to its very *ſubſtance*, if the ſoul be *immaterial*, and *annihilated*, or, at leaſt, as to *the principle of life and conſciouſneſs*, if it be *matter*; which would conſtitute it a *diſtinct individual agent*, having no intereſt in the good or bad conduct of that other; though, perhaps, it reſembles it as nearly as one Being can another. The reaſoning of *Lucretius* * here would be juſt enough;

* Lib. 3.

Nec ſi materiam noſtram conlegerit ætas, &c.

that if time ſhould gather together our materials after death, and, after they were reduced into the ſame ſituation, life ſhould be ſuperadded, yet would not that ſignify any thing to us; any more than it does, what Beings had been compoſed of the ſame ſtuff before we were born. This by the way.

SECT. XII. This notion then, *viz. That the death threatened to* Adam *was utter privation of Being*, appearing to be a miſtake, they who have been led by it into the ſame way of thinking concerning the hopeleſs ſtate of the *Heathens*, with Mr. *Hallett*, (for I have reaſon to believe he was firſt miſled by this means) may be convinced of their error. And, indeed, it is upon their account that I have given myſelf the trouble to confute this opinion; ſince, according to my own apprehenſions of the matter, it makes no alteration in the *preſent controverſy*, whether Mr. *Locke*'s notion be true or falſe; becauſe, if true, it can be known to be ſo only from *Revelation*; and therefore, all thoſe who have no acquaintance with *Revelation*, muſt argue after exactly the ſame manner as they would have done, if there had been no ſuch threatening; and muſt argue *right* upon one ſuppoſition as well as upon the other; foraſmuch as what would have been Reaſon, in caſe

caſe there had been no ſuch threatening, muſt be Reaſon ſtill, notwithſtanding that threatening to them that know nothing of it, and ſo muſt be obliged to believe whatever their Reaſon diſcovers to them; which therefore cannot be falſe. And, accordingly, Mr. *Locke* himſelf is more favourable to the *heathen world* than Mr. *Hallett*, his admirer and follower, is; for he *obſerves* *, "that God had by the light of Reaſon revealed to all mankind who would make "uſe of that light, that he was good and "merciful, and that the ſame ſpark of the "divine nature and knowledge, which making him a man ſhewed him the law he "was under as a man, ſhewed him alſo the "way of atoning the merciful, kind, compaſſionate Author and Father of him and "his Being, when he had tranſgreſſed that "law. He that made uſe of this candle of "the Lord ſo far as to find what was his "duty, *could not miſs* to find alſo the way "to reconciliation and forgiveneſs, when "he had failed of his duty.——This way "of reconciliation, this hope of atonement, "the *light of Nature* revealed to them; and "the *revelation of the Goſpel*, having ſaid "nothing to the contrary, leaves them to "ſtand and fall to their own Father and "Maſter, whoſe goodneſs and mercy are over "all his works." I did not know whether

* Vol. II. Page 529.

Mr. *Hallett* might not have forgot this paſſage, and therefore though it proper to put him in mind of it; as it might have ſome weight with him, though not in the way of authority, yet to make him review his notions with more diſtruſt and jealouſy, that he may have been in the wrong.

SECT. XIII. *Obſ.* 4. *The ſpiritual nature of the ſoul, and independence on the body, for its life and operation, are Scripture Doctrines.* [d] There is a ſpirit in man, and the inſpiration of the Almighty giveth him underſtanding. The different *original* of the ſoul from the body, is a plain argument of its diſtinct, and more excellent *nature*. The body was formed out of the duſt of the ground, the ſoul was more peculiarly the offspring of God. [e] *And the Lord God formed man of the duſt of the ground, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life, and man became a living ſoul:* compare with *Eccl.* xii. 17. What *Moſes* ſaith of *man*, that he was *formed of the duſt of the ground*; *Solomon* explains of one *part* of him only, *then ſhall the duſt*, or the body of man, *return to the earth as it was*; and what one expreſſes by *breathing into man the breath of life*, the other calls *giving him a ſoul*; *then ſhall the duſt return to the earth as it was, and the ſoul to God who gave it.* So that by the *breath of life* is meant the *reaſonable ſoul* of man, though, perhaps, with a particular

[d] Job xxxii. 8. [e] Gen. ii. 7.

ticular regard to its *animal faculties*; and by *God's breathing it into his noſtrils*, his giving it a Being by an immediate act of his power, and then uniting it to the body, already organized and diſpoſed to receive it, in order to its being acted upon, and acting by it. The ſoul, therefore, did not ariſe out of the temperament of the body, but was immediately from God; an *effect* of the ſame nature as the *cauſe*; for God is the Father of Spirits. [f] *We have had fathers of our fleſh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; ſhall we not much rather be in ſubjection to the father of ſpirits and live?* Here are two parts aſſigned to man, *fleſh* and *ſpirit*; God is the former of our *fleſh*, but not the *parent*; men, on the contrary, are the parents of our *fleſh*, but not of our *ſpirits*; God alone is the Father of theſe. This original of the ſoul from God as it's *Father*, demonſtrates its ſuperior nature. For *God is a Spirit*, a pure uncompounded ſubſtance, without body, or bodily parts; therefore, ſuch alſo is the ſpirit of man, his offſpring. The ſoul of man then, according to the doctrine of *Scripture*, is in its nature and original, entirely diſtinct from the body.

SECT. XIV. And from the nature of the ſoul it may be infered, with a high degree of probability, that the wiſe Creator intended it for a duration as boundleſs and unli-

[f] Heb. xii. 9.

mited as the nature he hath given it makes it capable of; and with the teſtimony of *Reaſon* concerning the ſeparate exiſtence of the ſoul agrees that of *Scripture*, which teaches us to make a diſtinction between the ſoul and body, in reſpect of their life and ſubſiſtence; a diſtinction ſo great, that when the body mingles with its original duſt, we are to conceive of the ſoul as returning to God who gave it; *i. e.* as exiſting out of the body, in a ſtate of happineſs, or miſery, as God who knows the reigning temper of every ſoul, and what its behaviour in the body hath been, ſhall appoint it. One would wonder, how this *ſeparate exiſtence* of the ſoul, when its union with the body is diſſolved, ſhould be diſputed by any who own the authority of the *Bible*. Our Saviour hath warned us not to fear men, *who can kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul* [g]; which muſt ſuppoſe, that the ſoul lives out of the body; it being, in effect, the ſame thing, if men can put a period to the life of the ſoul by killing the body, as if they could kill the ſoul *immediately*. In the *parable* of the *rich man* and *Lazarus*, we read, that when they departed out of this world they did not paſs into a ſtate of inſenſibility, in which one of them could have no advantage above the other, but were ſtill alive, though in a condition as oppoſite one to the other, as *Abra-*

[g] Matt. x. 28.

Abraham's *bosom*, by which is understood a place of great repose and felicity, to that part of *Hades*, which is the receptacle of none but wicked and miserable spirits; *Luke* xvi. from the 19th verse to the end. Our blessed Lord, on the cross, [h] *commends his spirit into the hands of his Father*; the like doth his [i] *protomartyr*, *Stephen*, into the hands of his gracious Lord and Master; and all the faithful in Christ Jesus are encouraged to do the same. [k] *Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* So that the righteous, after the separation of their souls from their bodies, are in the hand of God, or, which is the same thing, of their merciful Lord and Saviour, where they are not only kept safe from all danger, but injoy a satisfaction and rest vastly beyond what they ever knew in this world. Otherwise, were their souls as senseless as their bodies, they might as well commend their bodies as their souls, or spirits, into the hand of God; since both are equally under his providential notice, and kept till the morning of the resurrection. I shall add but one argument more, and that, indeed, is so clear and unconteſtable, as to render the mention of any more needless; I do not mean the Apostle Paul's *desire to depart, and be with*

[h] Luke xxiii. 46. [i] Acts vii. 59. [k] 1 Pet. iv. 19.

Chriſt, though the argument here is to me irreſiſtible, ſince he might every jot as well have comforted himſelf with being *in the grave*, as *with Chriſt*, if his ſoul, with Chriſt, was to be as inſenſible, as his body in the grave. And how would this have been *ſo much better*, even for himſelf, than the ſatisfaction he had in a life, honourable to his beloved Maſter, and greatly uſeful to the Church of God, and to mankind? What I have my eye to here, is St. *Paul's rapture to the third heaven*, ſpeaking of which, he ſaith twice, that *he could not tell, whether he was in the body or out of the body, when, being caught up into paradiſe, he heard things unutterable.* Now who does not ſee, there could be no room for this doubt, if the ſoul is ſo dependent upon the body, as no longer to live and think and act than while it is in it? For then, theſe extraordinary viſions and revelations would have proved that his ſoul could not have been ſeparate from his body, becauſe in ſuch a ſtate he could have perceived and injoyed nothing.

SECT. XV. The *ſacred Scriptures* being thus clear and expreſs in this matter, if there are any obſcure paſſages which ſeem to ſpeak a contrary language, they ought to have their meaning fixed by ſuch more plain and obvious ones as thoſe which have been now quoted. And after this, I hope the ar-

argument for a Future State from the *natural immortality of the ſoul* may ſtand firm when it is not only conſiſtent with *Scripture-Revelation*, but ſupported by it. Were it true, as ſome men have ſaid, that the *immateriality* of the ſoul is a notion of *pagan extraction*, which the Scripture plainly diſapproves, all that are governed by the authority of Scripture muſt give it up, and reſt the proof of a Future State from Reaſon, wholly upon the *moral arguments*. But it is a ſatisfaction that no ſuch thing as this appears, but the contrary; by which means, the moral arguments inſinuate themſelves with much greater advantage into the mind, when the prejudice, from the materiality of the ſoul, and its neceſſary and total dependance on the body, is firſt removed.

SECT. XVI. This further ſhews the miſtake of thoſe who tell us, as from *Scripture*, that *if there be no Reſurrection, there is no Future State*. And that the reaſoning of St. *Paul* in 1 *Cor.* xv. and of our *Saviour* himſelf, *Matt.* xxii. 31, 32. is founded upon this ſuppoſition. This from what hath been now proved appears to be falſe, ſuppoſing them to mean that *the reſurrection of the body is neceſſary to the notion of any Future State*, ſo as that there is no proving the latter unleſs the former be firſt proved. For ſince the ſoul is of a diſtinct nature from the body, according to the *Scripture account* of

of it, and does not actually die with it, the same *Scripture* cannot say, that the soul would *naturally* die with the body, if the body was not to be raised again; it being impossible, that the *future resurrection* of the body should contribute by way of *natural causality* to the preservation of the soul *in the mean while*; and therefore, *according to the natural course of things*, the soul which out-lives the body, now that there is to be a resurrection, would have done the same, if there had been none. Mr. *Hallett* must not think to answer, that *then* the sentence of death would have taken place on *both*, which, *at present*, takes hold only of the *body*. I have shewn before that there was no such sentence, and that, if there had been, there would have been the same necessity for executing it on the soul as on the body, in order to vindicate the truth and wisdom of God. Not to add, that what is unknown, (as this sentence of death is by the *light of nature)* cannot affect our *natural reasonings* about the immortality of the soul and a Future State. Mr. *Hallett*, to be consistent with himself, when he speaks of the connection between the resurrection of the body, and a Future State, must suppose it to be *natural*; because he says that the *Heathens*, according to the [1] *Apostle*'s account of them, went upon this supposition,

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 13.

ſition, that if there would be no reſurrection of the body, there would be no Future State of happineſs for the ſoul *. Not to remark, that the *Apoſtle* was too well acquainted with the ſentiments and writings of the *Heathens* to give any ſuch account of them, which is contrary to *known fact*; it being certain that they did not expect the reſurrection of the body, and as certain that they did expect a ſtate of happineſs for virtuous ſouls: the thing I would here obſerve is, that, if in the apprehenſion of the *Heathens* themſelves, the future happy ſtate of the ſoul depended upon the reſurrection of the body, it muſt be becauſe the ſoul, according to them, is dependent on the body in its exiſtence and operations. The ſoul hath no future ſtate of *exiſtence*, if the body hath not, therefore no future ſtate of *happineſs*. It is thus they muſt have argued. Let him not ſay, that though the ſoul might exiſt and think, yet it could not be happy; unleſs he hath a mind to deny the happy ſtate of the *ſpirits of juſt men* in the interval between death and the reſurrection. Beſides, that if it were really ſo, that the ſoul could not be happy without the body, yet the *Heathens* could not be of that opinion, who, finding the body to be the ſource of numberleſs evils and calamities, and being ignorant of its having been once more happily

* Page 299.

pily formed and disposed, imagined, many of them, a state of preexistence for their sins; in which souls were imprisoned in *terrestrial bodies* till the time of their punishment was expired. And, by the way, this makes me wonder to hear him talk in the strange manner he does, *p.* 323. When men are dead they are punished for sin; as long as they are in the grave they are actually under punishment. How then could men prove from Reason, that God would raise them up from this state of punishment? The *Heathens* having no knowledge of the *paradisiacal state* of man, and of immortality *in the body*, if man had not transgressed, could not look upon it as the punishment of sin to be divorced from such a vile and wretched body as this. Death, in the present circumstances of things, and by those whose bodies sunk under their own burthen, as well as under a load of outward evils, if their souls had the prospect of a happy life beyond the grave, could not but be deemed *a kind appointment of nature*; and as such, accordingly, they talk of it.

SECT. XVII. But where then is the thread of our *Saviour*'s reasoning; and of his *Apostle* St. *Paul?* As to the argument with which *our Lord* presses the unbelieving *Sadducees*, we are to consider, that as these men denied both *the resurrection of the body, and the separate state of the soul*, so our *Sa-*

Saviour's argument concludes for both these; *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*; St. *Luke* adds, *for all live to him.* These words were spoken of these holy *Patriarchs* long after they ceased to live in this world, yet doth God style himself *their God:* but now, *he is not the God of the dead, but of the living*; therefore they were not *wholly* dead at that time; their souls lived *to God*, and *with* him, according to that of an ancient *Jewish* Writer, *that the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God*[m]. But because the soul is only a part of the man, and God's taking to himself the title of *the God of these good men*, implies that he would be *their exceeding great reward*, and because too he is *the God of the living*, (which *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* were not at that time as to their *entire beings*) therefore they must live to God, not only as to their souls, which were actually living, but as to their bodies too, in respect of God's decree to raise them up; which renders the event so certain, that *things, which are not, may*, on that account, *be called as if they were*; and, having restored them to life, he will bestow that happiness both of body and soul upon them, which will prove to the conviction of

[m] Wisdom iii. 1.

of the whole world, that he did not ſtyle himſelf *their God* without reaſon. Thus our Saviour's argument reaches both the errors of this impious Sect, *viz.* That of the mortality of the ſoul, and the body's dying ſo as to riſe, and live, no more. But ſuppoſing the thing intended to be proved by *Chriſt* was immediately no more than the reſurrection of the body, yet, in proving this, he *conſequentially* proves the ſoul's ſubſiſting after death; foraſmuch as it is neceſſary that the life of the ſoul ſhould continue uninterrupted, that the perſons *before death*, and *after the reſurrection*, may be the ſame, which they would not be if their life was *entirely new*.

SECT. XVIII. The *Apoſtle*'s argument, againſt thoſe Chriſtians who denied the reſurrection, turns wholly on the *vanity and unprofitableneſs of the chriſtian profeſſion* upon their principles. For if there was to be no reſurrection of the dead, *then was Chriſt not riſen*; and if Chriſt was not riſen, they who believed in him as *dying for their offences, and riſing again for their juſtification*, were in the ſame condition as they would have been without this faith, and conſequently were *in*, or under the guilt of *their ſins*, if they were ſo before; their faith in Chriſt availing nothing to their deliverance from them: *ver.* 18, *Then, they alſo, that are fallen aſleep in Chriſt* (by whom

whom the *martyrs* ſeem more eſpecially to be intended) *are periſhed*, for any thing that Chriſt can do for them, who will never reward them for their ſufferings; never reſtore that life which they loſt for his ſake: *ver.* 19. he goes on, *If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable.* If Chriſtians are to receive no reward from their Maſter after this life (which is the caſe, *if Chriſt be not riſen)* then they are ελεεινοτεροι παντων ανθρωπων, more to be pitied than any men, as wanting the common underſtanding of men, to ſuffer, and much more to ſuffer death, for his ſake who would never be able to recompence them for it; loſing their life, without finding it again. The moſt difficult paſſage is ſtill behind, in the 32d verſe; but the ſame *key* will let us into the meaning of it. *If after the manner of men I have fought with beaſts at Epheſus, what advantageth it me, if the dead riſe not? Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die.* If the dead riſe not, then is Chriſt not riſen, and if Chriſt be not riſen we can have no hope in him, as to any reward at all, and much leſs as to any reward after death. Why then ſhould we deny ourſelves the pleaſures of life, and fooliſhly run upon ſuch difficulties and hazards as might eaſily be avoided? As is done by the followers of Chriſt, and eſpecially by us his *Apoſtles*, and by myſelf in par-

particular, who might have encountered with *wild beaſts* as ſafely as with ſome men, whom I have made my enemies by my boldneſs and conſtancy in the chriſtian faith. We have the ſame natural deſires and appetites as other men; and as we muſt be men of no principles, if, knowing Chriſt not to be riſen, we endeavour to perſuade the world that he is; and that the Goſpel is a divine Religion, when we are conſcious to its being at beſt but *a cunningly deviſed fable*; as, I ſay, upon this ſuppoſition we can have no fear of God before our eyes, no apprehenſions of an after reckoning, but muſt be meer *Epicureans* in principle, why do we not reaſon, as other *Epicureans* do, conſiſtently with the freedom of our notions, and as thoſe libertines, whom the prophet *Iſaiah* deſcribes—[n] *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*—Let us not, for the poor pleaſure of deluding the world with a falſe ſtory, ſacrifice our eaſe, affect to lead a life of abſtinence and mortification, draw upon ourſelves the diſpleaſure of the great and powerful, and die before our time. Rather, let us indulge our inclinations, and paſs a ſhort life as pleaſantly as we can. This would be our wiſeſt way, if Chriſt were not riſen, and we who call ourſelves his Apoſtles, were perſons of no Religion, no faith, and honeſty. *But be not deceived, evil communications*

[n] Iſa. xxii. 13.

nications corrupt good manners. These are only the suggestions of evil-minded men; things are quite otherwise than I have here supposed them, for arguments sake, and to expose the absurdity of them. We are not false witnesses, but know Christ to be risen, and do therefore contentedly suffer so many things for his and the Gospel's sake; and Christ being risen, we assure you, in consequence of this great and fundamental doctrine of Christianity, of the resurrection of all men, and particularly of the glorious resurrection of those who are *Christ's at his coming.* They who would have you believe otherwise, are persons from whose conversation you can reap no advantage, either as to your principles, or morals.

Here is no occasion, then, for having recourse to that supposition, *no Resurrection, no Future State,* to help out the *Apostle*'s reasoning, which appears to be very clear and easy without it; the true and entire chain being this—If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is the resurrection of Jesus a fable; if the resurrection of Jesus be a fable, we who invented this fable, or, knowing it to be such, would impose it upon the world for a certain truth, must not only think that there is no resurrection of the body, but that there is no other life besides this, no future account, or can be under no restraints from

the conſideration of it; and therefore ſhould not, like fools and madmen, part with all the ſolid bleſſings of life for the ſake of propagating an impoſture, but, more agreeably to our real character, and the looſe principles we muſt have entertained, if we were deceivers, abandon ourſelves to a life of eaſe, and of ſenſual pleaſure and indulgence. For want of obſerving the intermediate links, *if the dead riſe not, Chriſt is not riſen*; *if Chriſt is not riſen, we are wicked impoſtors that have no regard to a Future State*, (which are plainly underſtood, though not expreſſed) ſome have been at a loſs for the *Apoſtle*'s meaning; while others have quite miſtaken it, by imagining an *immediate* connection between the *principle* ſuppoſed, *that the dead riſe not*, and the *inference, let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*; and, upon this miſtake, have advanced an opinion that is, in its natural conſequence, deſtructive of all Religion.

SECT. XIX. *Obſ.* 5. *The Scripture Revelation, having expreſsly declared a judgment to come, to which all mankind ſhall be ſummoned, cannot teach any thing which implies this final judgment is neceſſarily unknown to any part of the world; as it muſt be to multitudes if Reaſon be ſilent about it.* The *firſt part* of this propoſition, *viz. that the Scripture hath expreſsly declared a future, univerſal, judgment*, is eaſily proved. The terms,

terms, in which this jugment is ſpoken of, are extenſive and unlimited, [o] *God will judge the world.* [p] *It is appointed to men once to die, and after this the judgment.* The judgment here refered to is *after death*; and as it is appointed that *all* ſhall die, ſo that *all* ſhall be judged; there is not the leaſt hint added to reſtrain the judgment to ſome, excluſive of others. If it ſhould be ſuggeſted, without all appearance of Reaſon, that there may be a ſecret limitation in thoſe places, we have others that cannot be ſo evaded; [q] *It ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city*, which ſhall not receive you my Apoſtles, nor hear your words. The inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, who were *Heathens*, are to appear in judgment; and, *wicked as they were, and ſinners before the Lord exceedingly*, ſhall eſcape better than thoſe who had the offers of Goſpel-grace, and refuſed it. [r] *As he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.* Why, but to awaken the conſcience of this *heathen governor*, did the *Apoſtle Paul* inſiſt upon theſe topicks? And why did this ſinner, though a *Pagan*, tremble to hear the great *Apoſtle of the Gentiles* diſcourſe of theſe things, if he was not conſcious to his own intemperance and injuſtice, and apprehenſive that he,

[o] Acts xvii. 31. Rom. iii. 6. [p] Heb. ix. 27.
[q] Matt. x. 15. [r] Acts xxiv. 25.

who now ſat in judgment upon a better man than himſelf, ſhould hereafter be called before a higher tribunal? [f] *As many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law; in the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt.*

SECT. XX. Theſe places, to which others might be added, are clear and deciſive for the *univerſality* of the future judgment. And it cannot be (which is the *other part* of the propoſition) that when *all men* are to be judged, any of them ſhould be *neceſſarily* ignorant of that judgment, which yet is unavoidable, as to much the greater part of the world, if the *light of nature* does not manifeſt it to them. Men are judged that they may *receive according to what they have done in the body, whether it be good, or evil*; and there is not a more powerful motive, to ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well, than the conſideration of the influence which theſe things will have on our final account, and the ſentence following it. And this motive is not more powerful and perſuaſive, than all others, without it, are weak and ineffectual; for both which reaſons, *viz.* the *ſufficiency* of this, and the *inſufficiency* of any other motive, we may aſſure ourſelves that no part of mankind are left *without witneſs* in this reſpect; that is, without the means

[f] Rom. ii. 12—16.

means of knowing that they must hereafter *give an account of themselves to God*; we are as sure of this as that God *will be clear when he judgeth*, and that *the judge of all the earth cannot but do right*.

SECT. XXI. I might argue from those *Scripture authorities* for more than the certainty of *a Future State*; from *Reason* even for *future rewards* obtainable by all mankind, and, in some degree, *discoverable* by them. For what room can there be for judgment, where men were never in *a state of trial?* Or what trial can there be where there is *no possibility*, at least, *no moral possibility*, of doing the things that are required of us, that we may please God, our Judge, and be accepted of him? A judgment to come presupposes a state of trial and probation; a state of trial implies that it is in the power of men to do good, or evil; a power to do these, is an argument of its being in their choice to be either happy or miserable. Else, what is called *the judgment to come*, is not so properly such, as a publick and final declaration of *God's absolute decree* to save some, and destroy others. But of the manner of God's dealing with those who are without a Revelation more will be said under the following observation.

SECT. XXII. *Obs.* 6. *When we take a view of the two grand counterparts of the scheme of Providence, in the correspondence they have*

one to the other, viz. *the fall of man, and his recovery, or the damage ſuſtained by the human nature and race in* Adam, *and the reparation of it by Jeſus Chriſt, we have reaſon to think that theſe two had a neceſſary relation to, and dependance upon, one another, in the deſign of God; ſo as that the poſterity of fallen man lie under no incapacity for attaining happineſs and immortality but what is removed by the Saviour of the world; and what would not have been permitted but upon this appointment.* This ſupplies an eaſy vindication of the conduct of Providence towards our lapſed race, which, upon any other principles, muſt be attended with inextricable doubts and difficulties, and repreſents the attributes of God in the moſt amiable light. And, for ought I can ſee, it is not only perfectly agreeable with the principles of *Scripture Revelation*, but countenanced by ſeveral hints and paſſages in it.

SECT. XXIII. The promiſe given immediately after the *fall*, that *the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head*; or that an extraordinary perſon, to be born of a woman, deſcended from *her* over whoſe weakneſs and credulity the devil had now triumphed, ſhould gain as compleat a victory over this proud and malicious ſpirit, as that which was the ground of his preſent exultation; this promiſe, I ſay, being

being so *early*, and expressed after such a manner, intimates the concern which *all the children of men* had in it. *Adam* and *Eve* had no child when this promise was made; the promise therefore was to them, and to their seed after them, of all ages and nations. They had lost immortality by listening to the temptation of the enemy, and they had lost it both for themselves, and all their descendants; and what could they think, or what can we reasonably conclude, less, than that since this immortality was to be regained by a *second man* (yet *more* than man) who was to be the great Champion and Redeemer of human-kind, as all were to be involved in the consequences of the first apostasy, so none should be shut out from a share in the conquest to be obtained by the Saviour of the world; such only excepted, as should deprive themselves of a part in it. If we consider the same promise as renewed to *Abraham*, we find it runs in the most general terms; [t] *In thee* (that is, in the *Messiah*, who is to spring from thee) *shall all the families, or nations, of the earth be blessed.* But how are all the nations blessed in the *promised seed*, if those nations only are so that actually injoy the Gospel, who bear but a small proportion to the nations which have professed, and do still live under, other Religions?

[t] Gen. xii. 3. compared with Gal. iii. 8.

SECT. XXIV. And, accordingly, concerning the redemption of men from that death which came into the world by the firſt ſin, we are told, that *as in* Adam *all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.* And for what end? Only that they may die again, or become more miſerable? God forbid. They ſhall not continue for ever under the dominion of death, for the ſin of *Adam*; nor be rendered incapable of happineſs and immortality by any impotence and corruption of nature, which they inherit from him; but ſhall have ſtrength given them to perform all that God demands from ſuch frail and lapſed creatures, in order to entitle them to his favour, and ſhall injoy a happineſs ſuitable to their imperfect, if ſincere, obedience, for the ſake of that great Redeemer, who undertakes to mediate for them; for [u] *as the Father hath life in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the Son to have life in himſelf,* (or a power to communicate life, by raiſing men from the dead) *and hath given him authority to execute judgment alſo* (to reward and puniſh men, as their univerſal Lord, and Judge) *becauſe he is the ſon of man* (that perſon, concerning whom it was propheſied that God would give him an univerſal and everlaſting dominion, and by whom he hath appointed to judge the world in righteouſneſs.) *Marvel not at this* (to hear me ſpeak in this ſtyle,

[u] John v. 26—29.

ſtyle, of my quickening whom I will, and being the Lord, and Judge of all) *for the hour is coming, in the which all* (not a few perſons only, as at my reſurrection, which is juſt at hand, *ver.* 25. but all) *that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth, they that have done good to the reſurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the reſurrection of damnation.* From this moſt remarkable place we learn that the laſt reſurrection will be univerſal; that the author of it will be the Lord Jeſus in the quality of Mediator; and that the reaſon of the difference which there will be between the reſurrection of ſome and of others, is the difference in their characters and actions, they that have done good being raiſed to a life of happineſs, and thoſe only to damnation that have done evil. All that are in the graves ſhall come forth; men of every age, and nation, and religion, Heathens as well as Chriſtians: for how are we to conſider the reſurrection of *wicked Chriſtians?* That it cannot be in the nature of a *reward* every one muſt be ſenſible; nor will it be immediately and directly as a *puniſhment* of their own ſins; it being very unlikely that the ſin of *Adam* ſhould be *puniſhed* with *death*, and the ſins of *his poſterity* with *a reſurrection from the dead*; that they riſe *to damnation*, is becauſe they have done evil, but not that they riſe *at all*; this muſt be for a reaſon that equally

equally affects all mankind, *viz.* [x] *That the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*; that is, the whole race of mankind became liable to death, not for any personal offences of the individuals, but by the sovereign appointment of their Maker and Judge for the sin of the *first man*, which was soon after his creation, not without a gracious design of making up this loss to them by the obedience of a second, and more honourable Head of the human kind; in reference to which design it may be justly said that mankind in general (not those under a written or revealed *law* only, but *all* considered as standing in no other relation to God than that of *his creatures*) were made subject to death in hope of the redemption of the body, which is the last solemn adoption of the sons of God. I will not be sure I have hit the meaning of this obscure place; but however, think what I have offered may pass among other conjectures. The thing I am arguing for is further confirmed by the description we have in Scripture of the final judgment, as ushered in by the resurrection from the dead; the former extending to all without exception (as was proved under the last observation)

[x] Rom. viii. 20, 21.

ſervation) and therefore the latter. And, becauſe none ſhall come forth to *the reſurrection of damnation* but thoſe that have done evil (τα φαυλα πραξαντες, · *have lived in a courſe of wickedneſs)* and becauſe the holineſs and goodneſs of God will not ſuffer us to ſay that men do evil out of neceſſity, the *inference* lies plain, that no part of mankind are incapable of attaining to a *happy* reſurrection, through the merits of that *divine* perſon by whom they ſhall be raiſed.

SECT. XXV. Another argument, to prove that all men in this life are upon their probation for the rewards of another, may be drawn from that place in the 2d chapter to the *Romans*, before quoted. *Then* I only argued for the *univerſality* of the *future judgment*, from the connection between the *twelfth* and the *ſixteenth verſes*. *Now* I ſhall further infer the *rewardableneſs* of the good actions of *Heathens* themſelves from what intervenes between thoſe *two verſes*, concerning natural conſcience in theſe men, which is ſuppoſed to *excuſe* as well as *accuſe* them; both which acts of conſcience have their chief reference to, and, if they do not proceed on a miſtake, will be ratified by, the *authoritative abſolution or condemnation of all*, which will be pronounced *in the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of all men* (bring to light the true characters of men, till

till then ſecret, or hidden) *by Jeſus Chriſt.* Yet *once more*, it is obſervable, that the *Apoſtle* having, in that chapter, ſhewn that there is no reſpect of perſons with God, but every man ſhall be judged by the law he hath lived under, and condemned by that law, if he hath lived diſconformably thereto, *Jews* as well as *Gentiles*, yea, the *Jews* firſt, proceeds to aſk in the perſon of an objector, [y] *What advantage then hath the* Jew? To which queſtion his anſwer is, *Much every way, chiefly, that to them are committed the oracles of God*; not, chiefly, that one may be ſaved, the other not; which yet, one would think, ſhould have been the more direct, and proper anſwer, if, as ſome are of opinion, the ſalvation of the *Heathens* be a thing impoſſible. The *Jews*, before Chriſtianity, had, and the followers of Jeſus ſince, have the ordinary, and ſupernatural means of ſalvation; and are therein privileged above others, whoſe ſalvation, though it be poſſible, is yet much more hazardous; neither have they any promiſe to encourage and eſtabliſh their hopes, as thoſe have who are favoured with a revelation of God's purpoſes of grace towards men.

SECT. XXVI. So that we are not only able to prove a *Future State* from *Scripture*, for all mankind, but likewiſe a Future State

[y] Rom. iii. 1.

State of *Rewards and Punishments*. And it is but fit that all should have some knowledge of this State, though *all* do not know so much concerning it as *some*, nor are, perhaps, capable of injoying the same degree of felicity. It is not necessary they should know that the reward of virtue will partly consist in raising the body, and endowing it with more excellent qualities than this *mortal body* can boast; nor is it necessary that the very same happiness should be reserved for *virtuous Heathens*, and *pious Christians*; but, if future happiness be attainable for those who are destitute of a Revelation, it is necessary that, without a Revelation, they should be able to discover *that* there is such a happiness, though not *what* it is, and to discover it with *a degree of evidence* sufficient to convince any man, not wedded to his lusts, that it is his interest and wisdom to lead a sober, righteous, and godly life. Aud this will greatly facilitate the answer to an objection against the Gospel, from *its imperfect promulgation*, not more common than plausible; and according to the scheme which some have framed of Christianity utterly unanswerable. The Gospel is a most invaluable favour and blessing to those that injoy it, as will be shewn under the *next chapter*; but, as long as it is not of such absolute necessity that there is no

hope

hope of future happineſs for others to whom this heavenly light hath never come; and the Providence of God was pleaſed to put things on ſuch a foot for the univerſal publication of it, that, in all appearance, it could not have been placed on a better, conſidering that it was to be propagated from one ſingle city and country, as from a common center, and by one ſet of men, who had been witneſſes to the life and death, and reſurrection, the doctrines and miracles of the divine author and founder of this Religion; I ſay, conſidering this, the main weight of the difficulty is removed, and we can eaſily conceive that there might be good reaſons why God was not pleaſed to continue with the Preachers of the Goſpel a power of working miracles, and by *extraordinary* means and inſtruments to overcome the oppoſition that the princes and nations of the earth made againſt the introduction of Chriſtianity among them, till it ſhould have quite baniſhed every other Religion out of the world. Whereas, if men muſt unavoidably periſh without a Revelation, and the Goſpel-Revelation is vouchſafed to ſome, and not to others, though equally adapted to promote the intereſt of all, what can be offered to abate the prejudices of the enemies to Chriſtianity; or to relieve the minds of thoſe who are beſt affected to it, from that perplexity which ſuch a diſpenſation

penſation of Providence muſt needs throw them into?

SECT. XXVII. "But the ſuppoſition that "men can prove a Future State of Rewards "for repenting ſinners, by the mere light "of nature, is contrary to the doctrine of "the Goſpel concerning the myſtery of the "ſalvation of the *Gentiles*," *Eph.* iii. 4—6.* Wonderful reaſoning! It was a *myſtery*, or a thing not fully known till revealed, that the *Gentiles* ſhould, together with the *Jews*, conſtitute one *Church*, or ſacred ſociety, eſtabliſhed upon *a covenant of grace* expreſsly promiſing, among other bleſſings, eternal life to all that believe, *without reſpect of perſons*; *therefore*, Reaſon cannot prove any future rewards *at all* for the ſincere lovers of virtue and goodneſs. I ſhall not ſo far reflect on my reader's underſtanding as to ſuppoſe he needs my help in finding out the weakneſs of this argument.

SECT. XXVIII. If it be asked, whether this be not the acknowledged doctrine of the Goſpel, that *men are juſtified by faith?* I ſhall return no other anſwer than thoſe words of the *Apoſtle Paul*, as thinking them abundantly ſufficient, [z] *we know that whatſoever things the law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under the law.* By parity of reaſon, the Goſpel being directed to none but thoſe that hear it, is a rule for them, and not for others.

* Mr. *Hallett*, p. 353. [z] Rom. iii. 19.

others. Is it made the condition of *eternal life* that we believe in the Son of God? Is there no being juſtified and ſaved without faith? Is *Jeſus* the only Mediator between God and man, and is it neceſſary that we truſt in him under that character? All this is manifeſtly deſigned for ſuch, and ſuch only, as profeſs the Goſpel, or have had it fairly propounded to them. The perſons cut off, by theſe and the like *ſcriptures*, from the hopes of pardon, and ſalvation, are no others but thoſe who either reject the Goſpel from the influence of ſome corrupt principle, which blinds their minds, and fills them with prejudices againſt it; or who, pretending to believe and embrace the Goſpel, will not be perſuaded to comply with the great deſign of it. As to others, we may ſay as the great *Apoſtle* does, [a] *What have we to do to judge them that are without? Them that are without God judgeth.* He judgeth them, not by a rule of which they know nothing, but by giving them *the law in the mind*, and, according to that, paſſing ſentence upon them in the laſt day.

SECT. XXIX. " But it is further urged, " that it appears from Scripture that no " man would have been pardoned and re- " warded with eternal life, unleſs the Son " of God had ſuffered and died for men, and " there-

[a] 1 Cor. v. 12, 13.

" thereby made ſatisfaction to God *." I freely own it to be my opinion, that God diſpenſes every bleſſing to our *fallen race* in and through a *Mediator*; that even the *common* mercies of life are conveyed in this way, and much more *ſpiritual*, and *ſaving* ones, ſuch as the forgiveneſs of ſin, and the rewards of another life. But this cannot be made to prove that they have no ground to expect thoſe marks of the divine goodneſs, who have no claim to them on the foot of *juſtice*, and are ignorant of the *purpoſe of God* to confer them only *by the hands of a Mediator*. I am aware that Mr. *Hallett* deſigned the main ſtreſs of this argument to bear upon the *neceſſity* of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, in reſpect of the *end* to be anſwered by it, *the recovery of loſt ſinners*; and its *freedom* in regard of our *offended Sovereign*, who might have choſe whether he would have appointed, or accepted any ſatisfaction at all. And, if he had not, what had become of the human race? Muſt it not have periſhed without remedy? But now, that God hath provided ſuch a ſatisfaction they only know, to whom he hath been pleaſed to reveal it. This is the argument in its full force, and whether it proves what Mr. *Hallett* intended by it we ſhall be able to judge, when we have examined in *what*

* Mr. *Hallett*, p. 331.

ſenſe a ſatisfaction was neceſſary, and upon *what accounts.*

SECT. XXX. The ſatisfaction of Chriſt may be conſidered with regard to the *firſt tranſgreſſion*, and its *immediate conſequences*; or to the *actual*, *preſumptuous*, and *repeated* offences of mankind. As to the *firſt ſin*, with its *immediate* conſequences, *viz.* a proneneſs to ſin, and a liableneſs to death, the neceſſity of Chriſt's undertaking ſeems *immediately* to ariſe from the *decree* of God, that the human nature, being vitiated by man's eating the forbidden fruit, ſhould be tranſmitted in this feeble and ruinous condition to his poſterity, who yet ſhould not have any title to *immortality* (it muſt be remembered, I ſpeak of immortality both of ſoul and body) but by a righteouſneſs which ſhould be every way perfect; *remotely* from the *wiſdom* of this decree concerning the lapſe of the human nature in *Adam*, in order to its recovery by *Chriſt*. It *immediately* ariſeth from the decree it ſelf. God was pleaſed to fix it as an unalterable law, that no righteouſneſs ſhould convey a title to immortality, (or freedom from death) that was not without all mixture and defect. But now, ſuch a compleat, ſinleſs righteouſneſs as this, is out of the reach of the ſons and daughters of *Adam*, who, therefore, muſt not only die, but continue under the power of death, if a way be not found out in which they may be inveſted

veſted with a new title to what they could, otherwiſe, never claim. Indeed, were they *perfectly righteous*, they would have a claim to it, tho' the poſterity of ſinful parents; there would then be [b] *a law giving life, and righteouſneſs*, or juſtification unto life, *would be by that law*, as the Apoſtle himſelf allows; who, therefore, adds, that *the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.* The *promiſe by faith* is given only to them that believe; he does not ſay, the benefits purchaſed by Chriſt are imparted to them only.

SECT. XXXI. And, if I am not much miſtaken, there is one thing intended by the ſame Writer, when he ſaith, [c] *That by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, becauſe all have ſinned.* The meaning of this place, which hath occaſioned ſo much angry diſpute, ſeems to be no more than this, that *there is no man liveth and ſhall not ſee death*, becauſe *there is no man liveth and ſinneth not*; ſo that tho' it was by *one man* that ſin came into the world, and death by ſin, yet ſhould not death have actually paſſed upon all men, if all, as they grew up to Reaſon, had not actually ſinned; the *Jew, after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion*, againſt a poſitive law;

[b] Gal. iii. 21, 22. [c] Rom. v. 12.

the *Gentile*, not after the ſame ſimilitude, but only againſt the *law of nature*. This, like ſome other general expreſſions in ſcripture, muſt be reſtrained by the nature and circumſtances of the caſe. [d] *He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* Either this aſſertion muſt be limited to thoſe that are capable of believing, or elſe *infants* will be excluded by it, not from *baptiſm* only, but dying in infancy, from *ſalvation too*. There is a like reaſon for underſtanding the expreſſion, *all have ſinned*, in a reſtrictive ſenſe; all die by virtue of that law of mortality, to which all are made ſubject by *Adam*'s ſin; and yet the reaſon that death actually paſſes upon all men, or that God doth not miraculouſly interpoſe to make men immortal, contrary to the preſent tendency of their nature, is that all men, capable of ſinning, have ſinned, and do in many things ſin and offend all. We have one example to prove the truth of this notion; and it is ſufficient for the purpoſe, tho' but one. I mean, *our bleſſed Saviour*, who, tho' the ſon of *Adam*, was not devoted to death by that ſentence which appoints that *all men ſhall die*, becauſe *he was without ſin*, and the only perſon that ever was ſo. And, having a right in his own life, which was not forfeited by any

[d] Mark xvi. 16.

any law, he had power to lay it down as a valuable ranſom for the lives of mankind, and power to take it again, as a proof that he had made compleat ſatisfaction by his death, and would reſtore them to life for whom he died. This thought I owe to an ingenious friend, who, when I had been propoſing my conjecture to him on the meaning of that difficult place, very happily ſuggeſted this as a confirmation of it.

SECT. XXXII. The neceſſity of Chriſt's ſatisfaction in order to obtain immortality for thoſe who had no righteouſneſs of their own to ground a title to it upon, does *remotely* ariſe from the *wiſdom* of this decree concerning the lapſe of the human nature in *Adam*, and its recovery by *Jeſus Chriſt*. That God, whoſe underſtanding is infinite, ſaw fit to create intelligent beings of different ſpecies; ſome, as the *angels*, immediately deriving their exiſtence from him; others, as *mankind*, receiving and communicating it by propagation from father to ſon. Suitable to this diverſity of nature between angels and mankind, hath been the oeconomy of Providence towards them. Angels from the beginning, ſeem to have had, each of them, their entire doom lodged in their own hand; becauſe being contemporary and independent, every one among them was capable of acting for himſelf. But, as all mankind was to branch from a ſingle ſtock, God was pleaſed ſo to

order things, that the branches ſhould partake of the good or evil qualities of the ſtock. In conſequence of this, one man ruins the human race, and another reſtores it. By the firſt man's diſobedience *many* were *made ſinners*; by the obedience of the ſecond *many* are *made righteous*; *all* ſo far as to be put into a capacity of a bleſſed immortality; and all, who do not diſqualify themſelves by final impenitency, ſo as actually to injoy it. The firſt man did not more diſhonour God, and debaſe the human nature by his rebellion againſt God, and eaſy compliance with the temptation of the devil, than the latter hath done honour to *both*, by doing and ſuffering the will of his heavenly Father, and conflicting with, and bravely ſurmounting all the powers of darkneſs. In the conſequences of the fall, God's high diſpleaſure againſt ſin is made known, for a warning to all, who ſhall hear thereof, how they wilfully offend. In ſending his Son to redeeem the children of men, and to redeem them by dying, his hatred of ſin, and compaſſionate love of ſinners are equally diſplaid.

SECT. XXXIII. Thus ſtands the neceſſity of Chriſt's ſatisfaction with regard to the *firſt ſin*, and its *immediate* conſequences, *viz.* a proneneſs to ſin, and liableneſs to death. But as the neceſſity of any ſatisfaction in this view can be known only to thoſe who are acquainted with the fall and recovery of man,

man, ſo it cannot affect our *natural* reaſonings on this ſubject; from which we learn nothing concerning the reſurrection and immortality of the body, and the neceſſity of a Mediator to procure it, for want of principles to proceed upon, (not ſo much a knowing that mortality was the effect of ſin) but conclude with ſome certainty, that there will be *future recompences*; and that, particularly, as to the happineſs of another life, perfect innocence is not the only condition upon which ſuch imperfect creatures as we are may hope to obtain it.

SECT. XXXIV. If we conſider the queſtion with regard to the actual, preſumptuous, and repeated offences of mankind, the neceſſity of ſatisfaction to the great Governor of the world, that ſuch guilty creatures may be admitted to favour, and much more, that they may be entitled to a ſtate of glory and immortality, riſes ſtill higher; and is not altogether hidden from natural Reaſon. But then, as *guilt* hath different degrees, ſo hath the *neceſſity* of a ſatisfaction. For thoſe who have in the main lived virtuouſly, tho' not without all preſumptuous ſin, or ſuch ſin as they knew to be ſuch, and might with due reſolution and vigilance have avoided, the neceſſity of a ſatisfaction, over and above their repentance, that they may be pardoned their errors, and become capable of a lower reward, being, by no means, ſo manifeſt to Reaſon,

as for flagitious crimes, for a courſe of wickedneſs, or for a general diſſolution of manners. And accordingly, it hath been only about theſe latter, that men have appeared to be ſolicitous to appeaſe the wrath of heaven, by *extraordinary*, and even *human* ſacrifices; while their confidence in the divine goodneſs and mercy hath been ſuch, as to rely upon it, with very little heſitation for the favourable acceptance of virtuous ſincerity, and the forgiveneſs of ſuch ſins as may, in great part, be charged upon human frailty, and do not argue a predominance of the vicious principle. Nor were they *without hope*, when their ſins were more crying and aggravated; as may be ſeen in the inſtance of the men of *Nineveh*, who, on no other encouragement than what this hope gave them, repented at the preaching of *Jonah*, which they would not have done, if they had apprehended the caſe to be deſperate. This example is the more memorable for the notice which our bleſſed Lord hath taken of it.

SECT. XXXV. The Scripture informs us that *all ſin* (the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt excepted) *ſhall be forgiven unto men.* And, if it be ſaid that this is purely in conſideration of the atonement made for them by the ſacrifice of the croſs, without which they would not have been pardonable; I own it to be highly proper for ſinners to have the miſery of their condition without a Saviour ſet before

before them in the moſt affecting view; provided it be done only to magnify the wonderful love of God in ſending his Son into the world *to ſave ſinners*, the *greateſt of ſinners*; to ſave them, not barely by turning away the vengeance they had deſerved, and making them happy in an inferior degree, but by tranſlating them into a ſtate of glory and felicity exceeding the pretenſions of innocence itſelf. In thus magnifying the love of God in the redemption of a ſinful world (add, his wiſdom and holineſs in the method choſen for this purpoſe) I would not willingly come behind any. But if, when they ſpeak of the need of a Saviour, they would further inſinuate that mens natural notions of the divine goodneſs give them no reaſonable hope of forgiveneſs; not even of thoſe ſins which are conſiſtent with an unfeigned love of their duty; no hope of future happineſs, tho' in the loweſt degree, and for the higheſt degree of virtue they can attain to; or, if they think that God would have ſuffered mankind to fall into their preſent ſtate of ignorance and weakneſs, which tho' it be not the *proper cauſe*, is yet the *remote occaſion* of their abounding wickedneſs, if he had not mercifully determined to provide a remedy every way equal to the diſeaſe: if theſe, I ſay, be their ſentiments, I muſt beg leave to differ from them, and apprehend I have the Scripture on my ſide. Even greater tranſgreſſions are occaſioned,

ſioned, tho' not neceſſarily produced, by the unhappy circumſtances in which mankind are born and educated; which is, probably, one reaſon that for theſe alſo *men* may obtain pardon thro' a *Mediator*, while *ſinning angels*, having brought every one himſelf into a ſtate of guilt and miſery, are reſerved in chains of darkneſs, and without all hope of redemption, unto the judgment of the great day.

SECT. XXXVI. But are not the *Heathens* every where in *Scripture* repreſented as men *without hope?* Let us examine the particular places, [e] *Strangers to the covenants of promiſe, having no hope.* "The Gentiles were deſti-"tute of the knowledge of the *Abrahamic* "covenant, and ſo had no knowledge of any "divine promiſe of happineſs in a Future "State; the conſequence of which was, that "they had no hope of ſuch future happi-"neſs *." Thus Mr. *Hallett*; who, if he had not been too full of his hypotheſis, to ſee the plaineſt things that make againſt it, might have anſwered himſelf. The *hope* here meant is not barely of *future* good things, but of any at all, even of the favour and protection of God in the preſent life; and therefore, when the *Gentiles* are ſaid *to have no hope*, it muſt ſignify hope founded in a *covenant*, to which hope the *Jews* were begotten by the promiſes made to their fathers. Any hopes

[e] Eph. ii. 12. * Page 343.

hopes of this kind the *Gentiles* had not; and yet, for any thing this proves to the contrary, might abound in that hope which hath its original from the eſſential goodneſs of the divine nature, conſidered with the comment of a kind and bountiful Providence upon it. The *connection* of the words, *ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe, having no hope*, ſhews this to be the meaning. Another place is, [f] *Chriſt in you the hope of glory.* "The hope of "glory was a myſtery or ſecret among the "*Gentiles* before the coming of Chriſt, and "conſequently, they had no foundation for "the hope of a future ſtate of rewards for "penitent ſinners, till Chriſt brought them "a divine and expreſs promiſe of it *." The word *glory* ſeems to denote the dignity which the bodies of the juſt ſhall be inveſted with after the reſurrection, according to that of the ſame Apoſtle, [g] *Who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like to his moſt glorious body.* And of *this glory*, it is certain, we owe *all* our hopes to the chriſtian revelation. Or, if the word ſignify any thing more than this, it is that *tranſcendent* and *everlaſting* felicity which the *Heathens* could have but glimmering conceptions of: notwithſtanding which, they might be very well perſuaded that virtuous ſouls ſhould not be without all teſtimonies of God's gracious acceptance

[f] Coll. i. 27. * Page 357. [g] Phil. iii. 21.

acceptance of them in another life. So far then we are got ſafe, and, I fancy, we have as little to apprehend from 1 Theſſ. iv. 13. *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not even as others who have no hope.* That is, no hope concerning them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth, that they ſhall awake, and riſe to glory. That this muſt be (at leaſt part of) the ſenſe is plain from hence, that the *Heathens* had hope concerning their virtuous friends and relations (and *Chriſtians* have no hope with reſpect to *theirs* that were not ſuch) of their being happy after death; the effect of which hope, to moderate their ſorrows, did not depend upon its being rightly grounded: which proves that the Apoſtle could not lay the ſtreſs on this, that the *Gentiles* had hope indeed, but no hope that was reaſonable, ſince it is not the *reaſonableneſs*, but the *ſtrength* of the hope to which it immediately owes its influence in calming mens griefs and fears. " But, ſaith Mr. *Hal-*
" *lett*, they went upon a ſuppoſition that if
" there would be no reſurrection of the bo-
" dy, there would be no future ſtate of hap-
" pineſs for the ſoul;" to which I ſhall ſay nothing further, having conſidered and anſwered this objection of his before. Upon the whole; *Heathens* may be very juſtly ſaid to be *without hope*, when compared with *Chriſtians*, becauſe they have *no ſuch hope* as

Chriſtians

Chriſtians have; they don't hope for the *ſame thing*, the compleat, and everlaſting happineſs of ſoul and body; nor does their hope ſtand on the *ſame foundation.* The *Religion* which *Chriſtians* profeſs is the foundation of all their aſſurance; whereas, from the *Religions eſtabliſhed among the Heathens* they had no ground of hope at all. The publick Religions were every where idolatrous, which, inſtead of being warranted by *a divine revelation*, falling under the cenſure of their own Reaſon, could not be the ſource of a rational hope: all ſuch hope muſt be derived from the conſideration of God's eſſential goodneſs and mercy, the indulgent diſpenſations of his Providence, and the teſtimony of conſcience to the ſincerity of their deſire to know and do the will of their ſupreme Lord.

SECT. XXXVII. *Obſ.* 7. *Though the character of the heathen world be no real objection againſt the certainty of a Future Sate, in which ſincere piety ſhall have its reward, yet that nothing which hath the face of an objection may be left unanſwered, I ſhall ſhew that the Heathens have been greatly miſrepreſented in this Author's account of them.* This Propoſition conſiſts of *two parts*; the firſt is— That the character of the Heathens, let it have been never ſo bad, is no real objection againſt the certainty of a Future State, in which ſincere piety ſhall have its reward.

The

The queſtion is, Whether all men are not under ſome law, as the rule of their actions, obeying which, in a manner ſuitable to the capacities and opportunities which God hath given them, they ſhall be entitled to a future recompence? This is the queſtion; and not, Whether men do actually live according to this law? It is, I think, too plain to admit of diſpute, that men are obliged to do no more than they can, and ſhall be accountable only for what they have received; that God will accept the will for the deed, if they have what can be truly called the *will*, though no more; and more imperfect virtues, where thoſe that are more perfect are out of their reach. The Saviour of the world hath authorized us to reaſon after this manner[h], when he makes the meaſure of God's gifts to men, the rule of his judicial proceedings with them. And ſo far all mankind, whether injoying a *Revelation* or not, are upon an equal foot; the duty of every man being this, to uſe the light and ſtrength which he hath. And if one man is in a better condition than another on this account, that he hath more light and ſtrength afforded him, it is expected that he ſhould behave more exactly, and abound more in good works. Nay; I do not know but he who hath moſt is moſt blameable, if his good actions

[h] Luke xii. 47, 48.

actions have not a greater proportion to his greater abilities than the other to his less; *i. e.* he that hath *five talents*, and lets them lie dead and unimployed, or imploys them wrong, is more culpable than he who does the same by his *two*; and *this* than a *third*, who buries his *one talent* in the earth. The reason is, that the temptations which men are under from the irregular propensities of nature, though *absolutely*, or *in themselves*, the same to *all*, must *relatively* be most dangerous to those who have least light to discern the evil of them, and least strength to resist and subdue them. The degree of knowledge and influence may be so *encreased*, on the one hand, that it shall be next to impossible to act wrong, how violent soever the evil inclination may be; or so *lessened*, on the other, that there may be the greatest hazard imaginable of mens not acting right: which I take notice of to shew, that the common expression of *mens living up to the light they injoy*, does not mean altogether the same thing when applied to *Heathens* and *Christians*; the latter of whom have less to plead in excuse for their sinful omissions and commissions, though not greater in proportion to the light and grace of the *Gospel*, than those of the former in proportion to the light and strength vouchsafed them; because there is more likelihood of a man's receiving a less degree of grace in vain, than a greater. The *omniscient God* knows all

the

the advantages and disadvantages of every one's condition; and the *merciful God* will make nothing else a necessary qualification for his favour than such a determination of the will to that which is good, as is agreeable to the *degree of its liberty*, all circumstances considered, and would be more full, if that liberty was more entire.

SECT. XXXVIII. Does not the Prophet say, [i] *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* This is what God hath shewn man, and what he requires of man, *as man*; and very reasonable it is he should do the things that are required, if he can; as, to be sure he can, because it is not a *capricious tyrant* who requires them, but *God*, a most wise and gracious Being, who can never require impossibilities. Were such things required; to the question, *What does the Lord thy God require of thee?* It might be answered, Why, he requires that which he knows to be impossible; and what could he require worse? The Apostle *Paul* declares the *Heathens to have been without excuse*; I hope, not for doing what they could not help; for going astray, when they had no light to direct them better; or for breaking commands which they were not able to keep. A gracious

[i] Micah vi. 8.

cious God would not have given them up to a *reprobate mind* for this. It muſt therefore be ſaid, that if the Heathens were *to every good work reprobate*, it was entirely their own fault; and being ſo, what if the *greater part* of them, what if *all* were become filthy and abominable? Does their *wickedneſs* make void the *goodneſs* of God? No more than the *unbelief* of the *Jews*, in our Saviour's time, made his *truth* of none effect. There never was ſo univerſal a depravity as that before the *flood*; ſhall we therefore argue, that all but *Noah* and his family were *without any hope* of future rewards? *As wicked*, indeed, they were; and ſo are all *wicked Chriſtians*; but they were not *without hope*, that if they turned from their wicked ways they ſhould live; I may ſay, they were not without *aſſurance*, that if they, or any of them, had been as virtuous as they were wicked, they ſhould have been accepted of God in this world, and rewarded by him in the next; as is plain from hence, that they were *the ſons of God*, or thoſe that conſtituted his Church at that time, that were degenerated as well as others: ſo that even an *univerſal corruption* is no proof that men have not the knowledge of a ſtate of recompences, or the means of knowing it, and preparing for it. Was not the *Jewiſh Church*, in ſome ages of it, over-run with vice and idolatry, ſo as to leave no diſcernable difference between the

vineyard of the Lord, and the *common wilderneſs* of the world? The ſame may be obſerved of the *Chriſtian Church* for whole ages together. But was it therefore leſs certain in thoſe times than in others, that *it ſhall be well with the righteous, and that the reward of his hands ſhall be given him?*

SECT. XXXIX. For any thing then, which the character of the *heathen world* will prove to the contrary, the evidence from Reaſon of a ſtate of recompences after death may be very compleat; I had almoſt ſaid, even though they had been as bad as our Author hath been pleaſed to repreſent them; who ſaith, * "It will be very difficult for the "greateſt admirers of the Heathens to tell, "where to find *one* ſingle man among them, "who upon the largeſt ſtretch of charity (you muſt underſtand it of our Author's, which when ſtretched to the utmoſt, if we may judge of it by this inſtance, ſeems to "be exceeding ſcanty) can be thought to be "tolerably diſpoſed for a future ſtate of re-"wards. † —If Heathens had been able to "prove a future ſtate of rewards for repent-"ing ſinners, they would not have been "able to find above *four* or *five* ſuch repent-"ing ſinners, if they could find *one* at all." But if *four* or *five*, why not four or five hundred, or a thouſand? *&c.* "No, as there "was

* Page 303. † Page 304.

" was not at beſt one man in fifty millions " that repented of idolatry, the unnatural " and other ſins, ſo there would not be above " a dozen, or a ſcore advanced to happineſs.*" To ſuppoſe, there might be *four* or *five* repenting ſinners in the whole heathen world, is, it ſeems, a *very great* ſtretch of charity; and that there might be a *dozen*, or a *ſcore*, is the *largeſt* that can be. It may be ſo, if our Author ſpeaks only of himſelf; but I believe there are many, among whom I profeſs myſelf one, whoſe charity, without any ſtretching, will extend a great deal further than this. I cannot gueſs by what rule this *charitable Gentleman* forms his calculation. He does not, I believe, pretend to a *particular revelation* in this matter; or to have been *contemporary* with all the ages, and an inhabitant of all the regions and countries, of the world. And, as for the acquaintance we have with diſtant times and nations by *hiſtory*, it will go but a very little way; not one name in many millions of thoſe that have lived upon earth being come down to us. And he muſt have no ordinary degree of ſagacity who from theſe few can make a judgment of all the reſt, to a *dozen* or a *ſcore* at moſt. God forbid, we ſhould exerciſe as little charity in judging each other, as Mr. *Hallett* does in paſſing ſentence on the *whole Pagan*

* Page 305.

world! The beſt of it is, by ſuch raſh and ſevere judgments we can hurt none but ourſelves. Not to enter upon the vindication of *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Xenophon*, and others, of the two firſt of whom, he ſays, ſome (I know not who) talk as *ſaints*, and he ſpeaks as worſe than *brute-beaſts*; not to ſay more in anſwer to the aſperſions caſt upon theſe men than what may be thrown into a marginal note [k], becauſe the controverſy doth not turn upon

[k] In the place referr'd to by Mr. *Hallett*, there are theſe two lines of *Euripides*.

Αλλ' ες̃ι δ'ῃ τις αλλος̃ ευ βροτοις ερως
Ψυχης δικαιας σωφρονος τε καγαθης,

which, being quoted by *Plutarch* as expreſſing what *Socrates*, *Plato*, and the reſt intended, is plain demonſtration that the *love* they meant was of the intellectual kind (from *Plato* ſtyl'd *Platonick*) not that abominable vice which they are here charg'd with patronizing. And if they had regard to the beauty of the body, it was becauſe they look'd on that as an indication of the amiable qualities of the mind. Accordingly, the ſame Author, in his life of *Alcibiades*, ſaith, that the affection which *Socrates* expreſs'd for him, was a great evidence of his virtue and good diſpoſition, which *Socrates* perceiv'd to ſhine thro'. the beauty of his perſon; and fearing leſt his wealth and quality, and the great number both of ſtrangers and *Athenians*, who flatter'd and careſs'd him, might at laſt corrupt him, he reſolv'd to interpoſe, and take care to preſerve ſo hopeful a plant from periſhing in the flower.——And again, *Alcibiades* had a particular affection and reverence for *Socrates*, obſerving that his diſcourſes aim'd not at any effeminate pleaſures of *love*, any thing wanton and *diſhoneſt*, but at the correction and improvement of his manners. Which made

Cleanthes

upon the good or bad character of any particular persons; I would only ask, whether Mr. *Hallett* believes the best men in the sight of God have been those whose memory is consecrated in history? Whether true virtue does not oftner love the shade, and pass thro' the world in a manner unknown to it; and if known to it, yet is not so much esteemed, as some other talents and qualities, by those who take upon them to transmit names and characters to posterity, and to assign the value they shall bear? For my own part, I make no doubt, but the great *day of revelation* will furnish numberless instances of the truth of that saying, *Qui bene latuit, bene vixit*, in a nobler sense than was intended by the Poet.

SECT. XL. This Author having painted *that* a vast deal blacker, which was but too black before, I hope I shall not give any just occasion of offence, if I turn *advocate* for the *accused*; not in opposition to the *Apostle Paul*,

Cleanthes say, He had given his ears to *Socrates*, and to his rivals other parts of his body, which *Socrates* would not meddle with.

Though I do not suppose Mr. *Hallett* would *knowingly* bring a false accusation against these excellent men, on no other score but that of their being *Heathens* (this being too near a-kin to that *popish maxim*, that faith is not to be kept with hereticks) yet, perhaps, he himself, on reflection, may be sensible, that he was too hasty in thinking and speaking evil of them, and that what made him so, was a secret prejudice against them for standing in the way of his hypothesis.

every tittle of whoſe charge againſt them I am ready to ſubſcribe to, but to Mr. *Hallett*, who ſetting up for the *Apoſtle*'s interpreter, hath plainly miſtook his meaning, and aggravated things beyond all truth and charity; as I perſuade myſelf any unprejudiced perſon will be convinced, after he hath duly conſidered what may be pleaded in favour of the Heathens. *Firſt*, as to the *corruption of their manners in general*; and *then*, as to the *crime of idolatry in particular*. As to the corruption and degeneracy of their manners, it muſt be acknowledged, that St. *Paul*, in ſeveral places of his *Epiſtles*, particularly in the *firſt chapter* of the *Epiſtle to the* Romans, hath given them ſuch a character, as none can deſerve without forfeiting all claim to the mercy of God, and favourable opinion of their fellow-creatures. But are we to think, that the charge brought againſt the heathen world by this *inſpired writer* was deſigned to include every individual? That all of them, without exception, *were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins?* This is not credible of a ſingle age or nation, and much leſs of all nations and all ages, that of the many *thouſand millions* who had been without a *revelation* till the *coming of Chriſt*, and that have been ſo ſince, *none* have been *real lovers of virtue*. This I ſay, is not credible on any other hypotheſis than *that* of their being under an *invincible ignorance* of their duty, or an *irreſiſtable determination* to act contrary

contrary to it; which would prove that there was more reaſon why they ſhould complain, than be complained of. But not to inſiſt on this, there are *two conſiderations*, among many others, which ſhew that the Apoſtle's intention was only to deſcribe the *general ſtate* of things, or what the Heathens were, conſidered in one maſs, not in reſpect of every particular perſon.

SECT. XLI. The *firſt* is, that his account of the *Jewiſh Nation*, in the *ſecond* and *third* chapters of the Epiſtle to the Romans, is little better than of the *Gentiles* in the *firſt*, if we except *idolatry*. And as to their being clear of that, the advantage they had of a Revelation makes their other ſins more than a ballance to thoſe of the Heathens, with that thrown into the ſcale. If we do not underſtand what the *Pſalmiſt* ſays of the wickedneſs of the times he lived in as meant (inclusively at leaſt) of the *Jewiſh People* at that time, as the Apoſtle ſeems to give us authority to do, *Rom.* iii. 9, and 19. yet, by citing thoſe paſſages in a diſcourſe concerning the corruption of that people in the *Goſpel Age*, he plainly intimates that this deſcription did *then* generally fit them; and if ſo, the *Gentiles* could not well overmatch them; for they were *all gone out of the way*, *there was none that did good*, *no not one*. This people were ſome ages before ſtyled, [1] *the people*, *and*

[1] Iſai. x. 6. Jer. vii. 29.

the generation of God's wrath, expreſſions very like, if not equivalent, to that, *Eph.* ii. 3. ſignifying their being the objects of God's diſpleaſure, on account of their abounding wickedneſs. So that, unleſs from the indefiniteneſs of the charge we have a mind to conclude, that the *Jews* were univerſally corrupt, without the reſerve of a ſelect number (in which we ſhould contradict what the *ſacred hiſtory* ſaith of *Zecharias* and *Elizabeth*, *Simeon*, *Anna*, with others that *looked for redemption in* Iſrael) we have no reaſon to think that the *Gentiles* had no examples of real virtue to produce. Without qualifying the Apoſtle's manner of expreſſing himſelf, we muſt ſay, that the *profeſſors of Chriſtianity* were univerſally declined from their firſt love; ſince [m] *all ſought their own, not the things of Jeſus Chriſt.* The truth is, the Apoſtle's deſign in this deſcription of the ſtate of the world, both the *Jewiſh* and *Gentile* parts of it, doth not require that we ſhould take him thus rigorouſly; his aim being *principally*, if not only, to evince the neceſſity of the *Goſpel diſpenſation and covenant*; which he does by taking a view of mankind, among whom the depravity was ſo great and extenſive, that the time when God ſent his Son into the world might be called the *fullneſs of time*, with regard to the need there was of his coming, (as well as upon other accounts) and

[m] Phil. ii. 21.

and of an extraordinary grace and mercy, that such heinous and abandoned sinners might be justified and reformed. When men were fallen into so deplorable a condition, through their own inexcusable abuse of the *opportunities* and *motives* which God had given them to *know* and *do* his will, the *doctrines* of *justification* by faith in Christ, and of *sanctification* by his Gospel and Spirit, ought to be exceeding acceptable to them. On the first of these the Apostle insists, *Rom.* i. 16, 17. *Rom.* iii. 9, and 19. and following verses; and *Gal.* iii. 22. and puts both together, 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. *And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* It is here worth our observation, that the Apostle having in the *ninth* and *tenth* verses given a catalogue of very great sinners who should not *inherit the kingdom of God*, when he makes the application to the *Corinthians*, says only, *And such were* some, *not* all, *of you*; in which he does secretly allow that there were men of integrity among them, whose characters were not stained with any of the vices here mentioned. To proceed—This being the Apostle's design, to prove the necessity of the Gospel, for the justification and renovation of a sinful world, to the conviction of all, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that were capable of being convinced, he abundantly made good his

his point, if it appeared they were both ſunk into the deepeſt corruption of manners, though ſome rare inſtances might be found of ſincere, but, comparatively ſpeaking, very imperfect, goodneſs and religion, before the opening of the *evangelical diſpenſation*. This is the *firſt conſideration* which ſhews that there is no neceſſity of underſtanding St. *Paul*'s character of the heathen world as including every particular perſon among them.

SECT. XLII. The *other conſideration* follows, *viz.* that from divers places of *Scripture* we have ground to infer the contrary; or that the Heathens were not without examples of virtue and religion among them. When St. *Peter* ſaith, that *in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs is accepted of him*, he, not obſcurely, hints that there were ſome who did fear God and work righteouſneſs, though of pagan extraction; of which *Cornelius* and the *devout ſoldier that waited on him* were two inſtances among many. Thus in the ſecond to the *Romans*, St. *Paul* ſaith, *That God will render to every man according to his deeds, not only tribulation to them that do evil, but glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good; to the* Jew *firſt, and alſo to the* Gentile, *for there is no reſpect of perſons with God*, ver. 10, 11. And would the Apoſtle put ſuch a ſuppoſition as this, if among the *Gentiles* there were none who did good? It may be thought that

that this is only meant of ſuch *Gentiles* as had embraced Chriſtianity. But this cannot be, becauſe in the next *verſe* he adds, *that as many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law*, i. e. *Gentiles* not yet converted to chriſtianity; of whom therefore he muſt have ſpoken in the *verſe* before. And in the 26th *verſe* of the ſame *Chapter*, he ſuppoſes that the *Gentiles*, whom he calls the *uncircumciſion*, might fulfil the righteouſneſs of the Law, or the *moral part* of it, which was coincident with the *law of Reaſon*; in doing which, he tells the *Jews*, they would condemn them, who, while they made their boaſt of the law, were found tranſgreſſors of it, *verſe* 27. Some other inſtances will fall in under the head of *idolatry*, to which I now paſs on.

SECT. XLIII. Here our Author puſhes the Heathens with the greateſt vigour, and having, as he thinks, quite overthrown them, triumphs moſt unmercifully. A paſſage or two ſhall ſerve for a ſample. "Perhaps there "was not *one in a million* among the Hea- "thens, perhaps not *one at all* * that was free "from this inexcuſable ſin of idolatry, that "repented of and forſook it; and ſo there "was not one in a million, if one at all, "that could poſſibly entertain any *reaſonable* "hopes of a future ſtate of bliſs †." — "Before

* Page 301. † Page 367.

" Before the coming of our Saviour, all the " nations of the earth, excepting the one " very ſmall nation of the *Jews*, lived in " the practice of ſins inconſiſtent with ſalva- " tion, and particularly in the ſin of idola- " try, without repentance." As much as to ſay, *all* were guilty, not one in a million, perhaps, not one in the whole number, excepted *; the ſin they were guilty of was the *worſt of ſins*, and without repentance (that is, *a particular repentance*) inconſiſtent with ſalvation, and with God's receiving ſuch *monſtrous* ſinners to his favour †; and of this ſin (if our Author's word may be taken) they none of them repented. A very ſhort, and ſummary trial, indeed! Without giving himſelf the trouble to examine whether there might not be ſome *innocent perſons* hid in the crowd of *offenders*, or ſo much as entertaining a charitable ſuſpicion that there might, or diſtinguiſhing between the degrees of guilt, he diſpatches them at once. It is however kind of him that he ſeems to content himſelf with a *negative* puniſhment, and the kinder becauſe the crime was ſo *inexcuſable* and *monſtrouſly* great, even the *worſt* of all ſins; which, one would have thought, might have deſerved a ſeverer penalty than bare *annihilation*. Let us now ſee, whether nothing can be offered to mollify this charge.

SECT.

* Page 301. † Page 304.

SECT. XLIV. I shall begin with observing that the word *God* may be taken in different senses; the two most eminent of which are, first, *a Being self-existent, independent, and all perfect, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things*, in the language of *Inspiration*; the other, of *a Being made by mankind the object of religious worship.* In the *first sense*, the world, in the most uncultivated state of *Reason*, and under all the corruptions of *Religion*, hath ever acknowledged but one God. "In this irreconcilable "war, and vast variety of opinions, you may "perceive this to be the uniform law and "opinion of the whole earth, that there is "*one God, the King, and Father of all*, and "that the many other Gods, are only the "*sons of God*, and admitted to a share in the "empire with him. In this, the *Greek* a-"grees with the *Barbarian*, the *Mediterra-*"*nean* with the *Islander*, the *wise man* with "the *unlearned*[n]." This *one God*, is by *Antisthenes* styled *Deus Naturalis*, in opposition to the *Populares Dii*; these gods of the people, saith he, are many, while there is but *one God by nature*[o]. What light this affords to that of the *Apostle*, *Gal.* iv. 3. I need not take notice. This God they called the *God of Gods*[p], on whom all those other Deities depend

[n] Max. Tyr. Dissert. 1. [o] Cicer. de Nat. Deor. l. 1. s. 13. [p] Hier. in Carm. Pythag. Dan. 2. 47.

depend which we adore and worſhip [q]. The *forming God* [r], the *ſupreme God*, who made the univerſe, the Governor of all things, yet inviſible, in whom is every thing beautiful and good [ſ], the *firſt Cauſe*, and the *Almighty God*, according to *Macrobius* [t]; who further, moſt judiciouſly obſerves, "That the univerſe "is rightly ſtyled the *Temple of God*, on the "account of ſuch perſons as are ready to "imagine, that beſides the Heavens and the "Luminaries that adorn them, there is no "other God. For this reaſon *Scipio*, to ex-"preſs the omnipotence of the *ſupreme God*, "who can ſcarcely be apprehended, *never* "*ſeen*, names the whole viſible world the "Temple of that Being, who is only to be "conceived by the mind; that he who ve-"nerates theſe things under the notion of a "Temple, may yet be mindful to pay the "*chief worſhip* to the builder, and that every "one who is introduced into this Temple "might regard himſelf as a Prieſt in it." The *unity of God*, then (underſtanding the term in its higheſt and propereſt ſenſe) or the *Monarchy* (as *Lactantius* expreſſes it) was not unknown to the heathen world; which ſhews our Author's miſtake, when he charges them with being ignorant of, or not believing in the one true and ſupreme God *, becauſe, ſaith he, they muſt then have neceſſarily

[q] Sen. [r] Hier. [ſ] Xen. Memorab. l. 4.
[t] Macrob. in Somn. ſcip. * Page 310.

ſarily thrown aſide their idols; which would be a good conſequence, if men had always reaſoned juſtly, but will be owned to be worth nothing, when it is conſidered that men were become *vain in their imaginations*, before they grew mad upon their idols. Is there not a very great party in the *chriſtian world*, who while they acknowledge but *one Mediator between God and man*, do yet, in effect, ſet up a multitude of mediators; nor are ſenſible of any inconſiſtency in their practice? It was not therefore for having baniſhed the *notion* of *one ſupreme God* out of the world that the Apoſtle *Paul* condemned the Heathens as inexcuſable (which is not only the opinion of this Writer, but ſeems to have been ſo likewiſe of the learned Dr. *Clarke* *) for they never had a plurality of ſelf-exiſtent, co-equal Gods, without a ſupreme head; though, by the way, ſuppoſing them to have had ſo, they would not have been without excuſe, if, as the *Doctor* ſaith, the unity of God can no otherways be demonſtrated than by conſidering *a priori*, the nature of a neceſſary or ſelf-exiſtent cauſe; which is a way of proof that a great many learned men do not well apprehend, and is quite above the reach of the illiterate vulgar. St. *Paul* himſelf allows, that the true God was not altogether unknown to the Heathens, mentioning this

* Letter concerning his argument *a priori*.

this as the greateſt aggravation of their guilt, that [u] *when they knew God they glorified him not as God.* They *knew* there was but *one God* properly ſo called, and yet impiouſly *gave his glory to others, and his praiſe to graven images*; and in this ſenſe had *gods many*, and *lords many*, to whom they addreſſed religious worſhip, and adoration.

SECT. XLV. Theſe *new-comers* were continually incroaching upon the rights and prerogatives of the *only living and true God*, till at length they had in a manner quite ſet aſide all memorials of him. Men firſt worſhipped the creature together *with* the Creator, then the creature *more* than the Creator, and in time proceeded to that height of ſacrilege, as to worſhip the creature *without* the Creator: I ſpeak of the forms of worſhip *publickly eſtabliſhed.* Temples were every where erected in honour of theſe *idol-deities*, while *the Maker of heaven and earth*, had no place *where his name was recorded* but among the *Jews.* And this will ſufficiently explain the Apoſtle's meaning when he deſcribes the *Gentiles*, as [w] *not knowing God*, and *without God in the world.* Any one that ſhould have judged of them by their *publick acts and monuments of Religion*, would have ſaid that *the ſupreme God was not in all their thoughts.* The Religions profeſſed in every country, could ſcarce have taken leſs notice of him if there had

[u] Rom. i. 21. [w] 1 Theſſ. iv. 5. Eph. ii. 12.

had been no such Being. The God, besides whom there is no other, might, in this respect, be properly enough called *the unknown God*, not being *openly* acknowledged by the nations of the earth; or his worship so confounded with that paid to the crowd of *nominal deities*, as not to be distinguishable from it. What interpretation will Mr. *Hallett* give of that place, 2 *Chron.* xv. 3. *Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God?* Will he say, they were without the knowledge of the true God? Or only without the pure and uncorrupted worship of him, and the marks of his special, favourable presence among them? I presume he will say the latter. And why then must expressions of a like kind have such an aggravated sense, when the *Heathens* are spoken of? *Our blessed Lord* tells the woman of *Samaria*, that they (the *Samaritans*) *worshipped they knew not what*, because, as they had a less perfect *rule of worship* than the *Jews*, so they *worshipped the Father in that mountain, and not at Jerusalem*, the place appointed by God himself. How much more then might the *heathen world* be said not to know whom they worshipped, when their established worships were over-run with the grossest idolatry. Though, strictly speaking, they were not without all knowledge of a supreme Being, who presided as chief in the affairs of the universe.

SECT. XLVI. The inquiry concerning *the origin and progreſs of Idolatry* belongs not to this place. And yet I cannot forbear obſerving, with how much pleaſure, and how little juſtice, ſome men throw the whole blame upon the *Prieſthood*; not caring what becomes of all of that order, ſo the *Laity* be not involved in the ſame condemnation, whoſe greateſt fault, as they pretend, was their blind obedience to the ſacerdotal Tribe *. The Scripture attributes this miſchievous invention to *falſe philoſophy*. The profeſſors of wiſdom were the firſt fools in this kind, *Rom.* i. 22. and through the abundance of their own conceited wiſdom *knew not God*, ſo as to worſhip him *only*, and *in a manner worthy of him*; by their vain reaſonings introducing *the uſe of images*, and the cuſtom of applying to certain *middle powers* between man and the ſupreme God. It was, according to *Cicero* †, *conſilio quodam ſapientum*, by the advice of wiſe

* Quum ſacra illa rituſq; ſacerdotum prorſus inventa fuere, non in Gentiles qui dicto audientes fuerint, ſed in eorum Antiſtites heic culpa redundare debeat. Sacerdotes autem non minus ſnperſtitiones idololatriamq; invexiſſe, quam rixas contentioneſq; ubiq; gentium ſeruiſſe, nulli dubium eſſe arbitror. Quapropter de *Laicorum Gentilium* ſtatu futuro haut ita temere decerni oportere, ac Theologis quibuſdam viſum eſt, facile mihi perſuaderi patior; quum nihil eorum vitio magis verti poſſet; quam quod authoritati Pontificum ſuorum ſacerdotaliq; collegio ſemet totos ſubjecerint. *Ld. Herbert de Relig. Gentil.*

† Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. 1. ſ. 27.

wiſe men, that the gods were firſt repreſented in *human ſhape*, *quo facilius animos imperitorum ad Deorum cultum a vitæ pravitate converterent*, that they might the more eaſily allure the minds of the rude vulgar to Religion. That the *Prieſts* were not thoſe who firſt led mankind aſtray is evident from hence, that the *Prieſtly* and *Kingly* Offices were originally united in the ſame perſon *. And if this *Royal Prieſt*, the better to ſerve his ſecular ends, made the influence he had as Prieſt to conſpire with his authority as King, in corrupting the ſimplicity of Religion, with ſuch innovations as he pleaſed, theſe changes are not to be put to the account of Prieſt, but Lay-Craft. After theſe two functions came to be divided, the eccleſiaſtical power was but a creature of the civil, and under its controul and direction. *Jeroboam* was not the only Prince who made Gods and Prieſts to ſerve them, at his pleaſure. The ſame thing was practiſed every where by thoſe who had the ſupreme command. It is true the Laity having by degrees in great meaſure played the game out of their own hands, the Prieſts had cunning enough to make their advantage of it, and by imaginary terrors held the world (and many times thoſe that ſet them up, as well as others) in a ſort of bondage. But then this was not till long after idolatry

* Rex Anius, Rex idem hominum Phœbiq; ſacerdos. Virgil.

had gained a ſettlement, and the monſter *Superſtition*, however firſt begot, was not only compleatly ſhaped, but nurſed up to an immenſe ſize, by the arts of *Politicians*, the fictions of *Poets*, and the fears of the *Vulgar*; to all which the *Secular Power* adding its ſanction eſtabliſhed error in the dominion which it had uſurped over mankind. To return now from this digreſſion.

SECT. XLVII. Though it be confeſſed, that the *heathen Religions* were all of them idolatrous, yet will not this come up to Mr. *Hallett*'s purpoſe, ſince particular perſons were no further accountable for eſtabliſhed errors than by criminal compliances they made them their own. If there were any who ſwam againſt the ſtream, and, in the general defection from the worſhip of the one true God, preſerved their allegiance to him, inſtead of deſerving blame and puniſhment for the idolatry of others, which they could not help, they became worthy of the greater commendation for their own diſſent. And of ſuch, we may ſuppoſe, there were never wanting ſome, as the number was, in ſome ages, very conſiderable. In the days of *Abraham*, when idolatry had overſpread the earth, all were not tainted with the infection; for, not to mention *Melchiſedeck*, *who was Prieſt of the moſt high God*, *Abimelech*, *King of* Gerar, ſeems to have been likewiſe a ſervant and worſhipper of the ſame God,

God, and this in the midſt of *idolaters*, as may be gathered from *Abraham*'s ſuſpicion that *the fear of God*, or the true Religion, *was not in that place*; which ſuſpicion he could found upon nothing elſe but the prevalency of idolatry at that time, *Gen.* xx. 11. at *Zarephath*, a city of *Zidon*, and conſequently heathen, there was a poor widow who believed in the true God, and by her readineſs to follow *Elijah*'s directions in making a cake of the handful of meal ſhe had remaining, before ſhe and her ſon had eaten of it, approved the ſtrength of her faith. God ſo determines it in his Providence, that this woman hath the honour of entertaining the Prophet in a time of famine, preferably to any of the widows that were in *Iſrael*, 1 *Kings* xvii. 8, *&c.* which *our Saviour* himſelf takes particular notice of, *Luke* iv. 25. I might produce *Jethro*, *Moſes*'s father-in-law *Naaman* the *Syrian*, the *Centurion*, and the *Eunuch*, treaſurer to queen *Candace*. But we need not be ſollicitous about particular inſtances, when in the *ſacred hiſtory* we find there were great numbers of this character. At the departure of the *children of* Iſrael out of *Egypt*, there was a mixed multitude that went up with them, *Exod.* xii. 38. who, convinced by the miracles which had been wrought in the land of *Egypt*, turned from dumb idols to ſerve the living God; yet without making profeſſion of the *Jewiſh*

Religion; it being probable that these, or some of them, and their descendants, are to be reckoned among those *strangers*, or *proselytes of the gate*, concerning whom the law of *Moses* gives several directions. *Solomon*, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, recommends the case of the *stranger*, who, not being of the *people of Israel*, should come and pray towards that house; for, saith he [x] *they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and thy stretched out arm.* These are the σεβομενοι, the *devout Greeks*, or *Gentiles*, mentioned in the *New Testament*, of whom in the single city of *Thessalonica* there was [y] *a great multitude.* Of these, such as were conveniently situated for it, went at certain times to [z] *Jerusalem*, there to worship God in the outer court of the temple, which was left free to them; or frequented the [a] *Jewish synagogues* in other towns. Notwithstanding which, they were to be esteemed *Gentiles* still, having only renounced idolatry, and practising no more of the *Jewish* Religion than one *uncircumcised* might do. And there is reason to think, that among the *Heathens* who had not the same opportunities of joining in worship with the *Jews* at their temple and synagogues, many were to be found of the same principles;

[x] 1 Kings viii. 41— [y] Acts xvii. 4. [z] John xii. 20. [a] Acts xiv. 1.—xvii. 4.

ples; and, perhaps, when *Horace* * hints at the frequent converſions made by the *Jews*, he hath his eye chiefly to ſuch perſons as were drawn off by them from the idolatry of the *Romans*. Theſe might, properly enough, be ſtyled [b] *the diſperſed among the* Gentiles; which, poſſibly, may be the meaning of the expreſſion, [c] *and the children of God ſcattered abroad*; worſhipping *one God the Father*, of whom are all things; by which they were more immediately prepared to become *the children of God* by adoption into the *Chriſtian Church*. The [d] firſt converts to the Goſpel, from among the *Gentiles*, were of this number.

SECT. XLVIII. Beſides theſe, who abſented from the idol-temples, there might be others who went thither, being the only places of publick worſhip to which they could go, to avoid the imputation of irreligion and atheiſm, not partaking, any otherwiſe than by their bare preſence, in what was done there. A *third ſort*, when they prayed before images, might not imagine that the τὸ θεῖον, the divinity, was *like to gold, or ſilver, or ſtone, graven by art, and man's device*; and if they made their addreſſes to inferior

 deities,

* ———— Ac veluti te
Judæi cogemus in hanc concedere turbam.
L. 1. *Sat.* 4.

[b] John vii. 36. [c] xi. 52. [d] Acts xiii. 43.—xiv. 1.—xvii. 4.

deities, might only do it as to *mediators* between them and *the God over all.* And, though this was uncommanded, and therefore unjuſtifiable, yet, I fancy, we ſhould ſtretch the matter too far to pronounce them, for this reaſon, in a ſtate of damnation. Yea, I do not ſee, why we may not have charity for *thoſe who were ſunk yet deeper into idolatry*; provided they were *honeſt minded*, and did not ſo much want integrity of heart, as a clearer knowledge of divine things; there being great likelihood that ſuch as theſe had a confuſed notion of a power ſuperior to their idols, which exerciſed and communicated itſelf, they knew not how, by, and through them; ſo as that their higheſt regard, and chief praiſes were due to the God and Father of all. And, in this caſe, whatever others may do, I dare not ſay that the ſin of theſe men was ſo great and heinous as not to be pardonable without *a particular repentance.* That paſſage of the Apoſtle is more to the purpoſe of this argument than is obvious at firſt view, [e] *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs.* The fundamental principles of Religion, or the *common notions*, concerning the *unity of God*, as an object of worſhip, his *holineſs*, *the purity of the ſervice* demanded by him, *a governing Providence*, and *a future account*,

[e] Rom. i. 18.

account, were so stifled and fettered by the corrupt affections of a great part of mankind, as not to be distinctly perceived by the mind itself, or discoverable by others in the outward actions, any more than if there were no such principles of truth existing. Idolatry then (at least *that* which the Scripture calls [f] *abominable idolatry*, being attended with lewdness, cruelty, and excess of riot, and so capable of no apology) was the sin only of the unrighteous and ungodly, in whom *the candle of the Lord* was extinguished by lust; while to others, who did not thus hold the truth in unrighteousness, being lovers of the things that are good and true, truth discovered itself so far as to prevent their falling into *destructive errors*, and to screen them from the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness of men. From hence it follows, that as many as there were among the Heathens sincerely desirous of knowing and doing their duty (who were all known unto God) so many were there, either *wholly pure* from idolatry, or undefiled by that *sort* and *degree* of it, for which there was no pardon without a *particular repentance*. I would further take this occasion to mind Mr. *Hallett*, that he did not speak with all that guard he ought to have done, when he said, *that, perhaps, not one of the Heathens repented of his idolatry*. Does he really

[f] 1 Pet. iv. 3.

really think that none who had been ingaged in a wicked courſe of life ever repented of it, and became other men? If there were any ſuch, as no doubt there were, at the ſame time as they unfeignedly repented of their other vices, we may and muſt ſuppoſe them to repent of that idolatry, into which they had been led by their vicious inclinations, and by which, in return, their vicious inclinations had been encouraged and ſtrengthened. I ſhall conclude this head with aſking Mr. *Hallett*, whether he does not think that the beſt Proteſtant Writers have proved idolatry on the *Church of* Rome? Whether the idolatry of *Rome Chriſtian* be not leſs excuſable on ſome accounts than that of *Rome Pagan?* Whether, yet, conſiderations might not be offered from the circumſtances of a great many in that communion, and the goodneſs of their intention, which ſhould keep a charitable Proteſtant from determining againſt the poſſibility, or even probability, of their ſalvation, without a particular repentance? And finally, whether many of the ſame alleviations may not be pleaded with the ſame, or greater ſtrength for the *leaſt guilty* among the idolatrous Heathens?

SECT. XLIX. *Obſerv.* 8. *The* Jews, *before the coming of Chriſt, muſt be left without hope, as well as the* Gentiles, *if we are no more favourable in our interpretation of ſome paſſages in the New Teſtament which relate*

late to them, than Mr. Hallett *is in giving the meaning of others that regard the Heathens; and go upon his principle, that no evidence is of weight in the preſent argument which falls ſhort of ſtrict demonſtration.* That what the *Apoſtle* ſaith, 2 *Tim.* i. 10. includes the *Jews*, together with the *Gentiles*, is evident from the plain oppoſition of the *Goſpel* to the *Law*, in the 7th verſe, compared with *Rom.* viii. 15. and from the light which one part of the Apoſtle's aſſertion lends to the other; for, ſince Chriſt's *aboliſhing death* moſt probably ſignifies his redeeming us from it by the ſacrifice of the croſs, in oppoſition to the methods of atonement under former diſpenſations, particularly, the *legal*; *his bringing life and immortality to light by the Goſpel*, muſt conſequently denote the clearneſs of the Goſpel Revelation, in oppoſition to *the ſhadows of good things to come*, which the *Law* exhibited, as well as to the diſcoveries of natural Reaſon; not to aſk, with what propriety our Saviour could be ſaid to *bring life and immortality to light by the Goſpel*, if the *Goſpel* made little or no addition to the light which they injoyed who lived under the *Law?* In this caſe, he did not ſo truly bring the object to light, as make that light more univerſal, which was before confined to a ſmall corner of the earth. The ſame Apoſtle, if he was the Author of the *Epiſtle* to the *Hebrews*, doth in the 9th *Chapter* of that

that Epiſtle, *ver.* 8. aſſert, that *the way into the holy of holies* (or into the heaven of the bleſſed) *was not made manifeſt while the firſt tabernacle was ſtanding*, which makes him call it [g] *a new way*. Should we underſtand theſe and other places without any limitation, it might be ſaid, that the *Jews* had hope only in this life. If, on the contrary, they are taken *comparatively* (as for certain they ought to be) and imply no more than a higher degree of evidence for the ſame thing, it is but reaſonable that we ſhould follow the ſame rule in ſettling the ſenſe of thoſe places which ſpeak of the *Gentiles*.

SECT. L. Was it ever pretended that the *Jews* had *expreſs promiſes* of future and eternal rewards? Or does our *Author* himſelf believe that their *typical adumbrations* of theſe things had all the certainty that could be deſired? Or that theſe, or any other arguments to be collected from their *ſacred books*, would have given the ſatisfaction they did, had they not been explained and ſupported by the atteſtation which Reaſon gave to the ſame truths? The argument which our bleſſed Saviour makes uſe of againſt the *Sadducees*, ſeems to have been intirely new, or unthought of before; for it is ſaid, [h] *When the multitude heard this, they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine*; and being new, it could not, how concluſive ſoever, have been very obvious. Nor,

[g] Heb. x. 20. [h] Matt. xxii. 32.

Nor, I fancy (if we ſet aſide the conſideration of Chriſt's having ſtamped it with his authority) ſhall we find many who would allow this proof, as it lies in the *Old Teſtament*, to be a ſtrict demonſtration. An *high probability* it may juſtly paſs for; but *probability*, according to Mr. *Hallett*, ſinks into *mere poſſibility*, as ſoon as we begin to build upon it. Had the Books of *Moſes* contained any ſuch diſcoveries of a Future State as were clear and demonſtrative, it is hardly credible ſo conſiderable a ſect as the *Sadducees* ſhould have had the face, at the ſame time that they acknowledged the authority of theſe Books, to deny any ſuch State; or that they ſhould have paſſed without publick cenſure, and much more that they ſhould have gained ſo much authority in the *Jewiſh* commonwealth. It muſt be owned that the doctrine of immortality is more frequently and ſtrongly delivered in ſome of the other Books of the *Old Teſtament*, particularly in the *Prophets*. But ſtill the proof which the *Jewiſh Revelation* ſupplies, when ſeparated from the rational evidence on which it is built, and, eſpecially, when compared with the ſuperior light of the Goſpel, was very incompleat, and eaſily evaded by perſons not diſpoſed to receive the truth; who would be ready to object, that the *Law of* Moſes, which was the *original foundation* of their faith and hope, having promiſed only temporal bleſ-

ſings,

ſings, whatever paſſages, in the *Scriptures*, wrote long after this, ſeemed to look further, were to have their ſenſe reſtrained by the plain letter of the Law. That the Prophets made uſe of a warm and figurative ſtyle, in order to rouſe the attention, and ſtrike the paſſions of their hearers; and that, therefore, no great ſtreſs can be laid on thoſe predictions and repreſentations, which, in ſtrictneſs of language, could not receive their accompliſhment in this life, ſince even in theſe they might intend no more than an uncommon meaſure of temporal felicity, and ſurprizing diſplays of Providence in their deliverance from outward calamities. Thus would ill-minded men among the *Jews* have been apt to reaſon, if the *natural preſages and evidences* of a Future State had not helped to fix the meaning of their *holy oracles*, which would have otherwiſe been of doubtful interpretation.

SECT. LI. And why may not the cauſe, that ſo little is mentioned of future recompences in the *Old Teſtament*, and that little ſo indirectly expreſſed, be *partly* taken from hence, that *Reaſon hath ſaid ſo much?* And *partly* from the nature of the *Moſaic Diſpenſation*, which, being deſigned to ſeparate between the *Jews*, and other nations of the earth, only till a more perfect inſtitution ſhould be revealed and eſtabliſhed by the *Meſſiah*, is therefore more ſparing in what concerns

concerns the rewards of another life, that they might not think the difference between them and other people was in things *essential*, and to last *for ever*; and that the honour of a full discovery of the *heavenly world* might be reserved for that divine Person, who was to descend from thence for this purpose, and when he came, might promise himself a more ready and joyful reception on this account? This, I think, does fairly solve the difficulty arising from the obscurity of the *Jewish* Revelation, in point of things unseen and eternal, which, upon the principles of our Author, I despair of ever seeing cleared up.

SECT. LII. Being afraid that the *written Revelation* of the *Jews* alone would hardly furnish them with so clear a knowledge of unseen recompences, as he supposes them to have had, he saith, it is likely they had promises *vastly* more express than the *hints* which are given in the Old Testament*. So that, according to himself, we only meet with *hints* of eternal life in the Old Testament, so indeterminate and obscure, as to be of little service, without promises *vastly more express*. That they had such promises he thinks very likely; whereas I should think it very likely that they had not. For would not such express promises have been by far the most valuable part of their Revelation, and for that reason committed to *writing* for the greater security

* Page 376.

ſecurity of the conveyance, and not left to the many accidents and variations which *Tradition* is liable to? Give me leave to add, that the truth of promiſes, for which they had only *oral Tradition* to vouch, might juſtly be queſtioned; there being nothing to aſſure them that they were not derived from the *hints of Scripture*, joined with their own reaſonings and wiſhes. I have, indeed, made the ſame obſervation, as he does, *p.* 376. that the mother and her ſeven ſons ſpeak much more plainly than any Writer of the Old Teſtament; to which might be added other inſtances of a like nature, [i] *Command that I may be delivered out of this diſtreſs, and go into the* everlaſting place. [k] *The ſouls of the righteous are in the hand of God; and there ſhall no torment touch them. In the ſight of the unwiſe they ſeemed to die; and their departure is taken for miſery, and their going from us to be utter deſtruction; but they are in peace; for though they be puniſhed in the ſight of men, yet is their* hope full of immortality.

SECT. LIII. It may ſeem ſurprizing, that when the *Jews had no more any Prophet among them* they ſhould expreſs their hopes of a glorious reſurrection, and happy immortality, in clearer and ſtronger terms, than *in the days of Inſpiration.* Without having recourſe to ſo improbable a ſuppoſition as that of

[i] Tobit iii. 6. [k] Wiſdom iii. 1—4.

of their being in poſſeſſion of divine promiſes of two kinds, *written* and *unwritten*, and that the unwritten were *vaſtly more expreſs* than the written ones, I ſhall endeavour to account for it in another, and more natural way, *viz.* by reſolving it into the ſame cauſe with the falſe notions they entertained of the *Meſſiah*, as *a temporal Prince*. Let it not be thought incredible, that things *at firſt appearance* ſo very oppoſite as theſe two, the expectation of a *temporal Meſſiah*, and of *an unſeen and eternal reward*, ſhould have the ſame original. Once the cauſe hath been conſidered, it will not be accounted at all ſtrange, that it ſhould produce both theſe effects. The cauſe then, as I apprehend it, was that *ſtate of ſervitude* which that people, once the favourites of heaven, had been long in to *foreign powers*, by whom they were ſometimes treated in a moſt cruel and contumelious manner. The oppreſſions they lay under made them ſigh for deliverance; the hope of which inclined them to put ſuch a ſenſe on the *Prophecies*, which ſpoke of the conqueſts of the *Meſſiah*, and the glories of his reign, as was but too agreeable to perſons that had been long trampled on by the *foot of pride*; and this ſenſe of the *Prophecies*, ſo ſuitable to the genius and circumſtances of that people, was the more readily and univerſally embraced, becauſe they had no *living Prophets* to interpret them

better. We may allow alſo a *publick ſpirit*, and *love to their country*, to have had ſome influence upon them in falling in with this notion. Under their *national ſufferings*, it was a pleaſure to them to think, that however it went with particular perſons, who might not live to ſee the happy day, yet they ſhould live and die in the hope, that one time or other their nation would recover its liberty under their triumphant *Meſſiah*, and by him be raiſed to a more flouriſhing condition, and to a greater independence, and larger dominion, than it ever injoyed. But ſtill their *perſonal ſufferings*, or the perſecutions and hardſhips which particular perſons endured, or were threatened with, in thoſe calamitous times, called for *other ſupports*, and *naturally* turned the thoughts of the *pious* among them, from the afflictions and diſtreſſes of the ſervants of God in this life, to the reward of their patience and faithfulneſs in the next. They had but little reaſon, in ſuch a melancholy ſtate of affairs, both private and publick, to ſet their affections on things here below, or to think that the ſcene would quickly change. They might die long enough before their nation entered into that *reſt* which they imagined was promiſed them. And is there *no other reſt remaining for the people of God?* Doubtleſs there is. They were the more fully perſuaded of it, becauſe they ſo earneſtly deſired

fired it; as their *desire*, and *hope*, and *faith*, were all of them invigorated and enlarged by the *Spirit of God*, communicated to them in such *a time of need*. And, after some had borne their testimony to the truth, and, though tortured, refused to *accept deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection*, their *example* was of great use to confirm the faith, and raise the courage of those that followed them.

CHAP. IX.

The advantages which Chriſtians injoy by the Goſpel-Revelation, *in reſpect of life and immortality.*

SECT. I. AFTER all that hath been offered in favour of that part of mankind to whom a Revelation was never vouchſafed, I am far from placing them on a level with the *followers of Jeſus.* Reaſon may be *ſufficient* to anſwer every end deſigned by it, and yet be very *inſufficient* in regard of thoſe further ends for which Revelation was given. A *more perfect* knowledge of thoſe things which Reaſon gives but *obſcure notices* of, with the knowledge of other things *entirely new*, is the *immediate end* of Revelation; as the end of this knowledge is a higher degree of every holy and divine diſpoſition of ſoul; and the end of theſe a more glorious recompence of reward. That we may be able to judge how the account ſtands between the Chriſtian and other men, with reſpect to the knowledge and attainment of a bleſſed immortality, I would propoſe theſe few things to be conſidered.

SECT. II. *Nature* led the *virtuous heathen* to hope for happineſs in another life, but as to the *time*, the *nature*, the *degree*, and *duration*, of that happineſs, left him very much in

in the dark. He could not be ſure that death would put him in *immediate* poſſeſſion of his reward. The contrary was the opinion * of many, who diſtinguiſhed ſouls into *three* claſſes; thoſe of eminent virtue, who, having vanquiſhed the animal part, and by a courſe of contemplation and abſtinence delivered themſelves from its contagion, were no ſooner releaſed from the fetters of the body, than they were received into the number of the bleſſed; others who had too much indulged to the pleaſures and inclinations of the lower life, and ſo were obliged to paſs through ſome ſevere methods of purgation before they could be freed from the ſtains they had contracted in their fleſhly priſon; and a third ſort, who being grown incurable, were condemned to the regions of woe, without any hope of redemption from thence. What time was required to prepare the ſouls of the middle kind for a ſtate of bliſs, according to the laws of the other world, they could not tell. It could not be the ſame for all; and for ſome might be very conſiderable. But now from the Goſpel we learn, that all the *faithful*, upon their departure out of this life, go into a ſtate of repoſe and felicity, where they are *preſent with their Lord*, and *reſt from all the labours* of this mortal life. There are Chriſtians, indeed, to whom this advantage is loſt; I mean thoſe who be-

* See Plato's Phædo, *and* Virgil's Æneid. L. 6.

lieve the fable of *Purgatory*, firſt borrowed from the *Pagans*, for the profit which it was foreſeen a certain ſort of men would make of it, and afterwards pinned down on all of that communion as a neceſſary article of the *Chriſtian faith*. But as long as this notion hath no foundation in *Primitive Chriſtianity*, it cannot be made an objection againſt *that*. The privilege is the ſame in itſelf; though, for want of a freer acceſs to the Scriptures, it be unknown to great numbers. When the Heathen proceeded to inquire wherein the happineſs of the next life would conſiſt, he ſoon bewildered himſelf. He had no glimpſe of the *reſurrection of the body*; and could make but uncertain gueſſes as to the *freedom of intercourſe* which the ſoul would have with the *ſupreme Mind*. He could not be poſitive that the bleſſedneſs to come would be the higheſt poſſible, or (as moſt will think) pretend to more than a *probability* of its being immutably fixed and eternal. Whereas, by the *Chriſtian Revelation*, we are made acquainted that *the Son of God*, in our nature, hath, by dying, purchaſed *immortality* for us; not for the *ſoul*, no ſuch thing is any where ſaid in ſcripture, but for *man*, who is a Being compounded of ſoul and body, and the greateſt perfection of felicity in both; the body being faſhioned like to the glorious body of the Redeemer, and thereby made a fit inſtrument and companion to a pure and happy

happy ſpirit, changed into the likeneſs of God, and favoured with the viſion of his face; and this without all fear of *change*, or *period*.

SECT. III. Again; the vaſt diverſity in the *degrees of guilt* is ſufficient to ground a diſtinction of mankind into *two denominations*, the *righteous* and *ſinners*, and to juſtify the expreſſion of ſome mens *not needing repentance* in the ſame ſenſe that others do. Reaſon therefore cannot give thoſe whom we call *ſinners*, or *wicked men*, that is, ſuch as have advanced far in a courſe of ſin, or frequently relapſed into it, though now penitent, the ſame aſſurance of pardon and happineſs, as it does the men who have been always, or for a long time conſcious to themſelves of an unfeigned deſire to do the will of God; becauſe the former having preſumptuouſly violated the *law of Reaſon*, and after ſolemn engagements to the contrary repeated their offence, muſt know, that they have forfeited all title to the regard of their Maker, and cannot have the ſame ſatisfaction concerning their repentance, as the latter. Now here the Goſpel moſt ſeaſonably comes in to our relief by its promiſes of forgiveneſs, founded in the atonement of *the great Redeemer*, of all degrees of ſin, and all ranks of ſinners.

SECT. IV. The advantages for *attaining to holineſs in this world, and happineſs in the*

next, which the Gospel puts into our hands, are many. The struggle is such between *Reason* and *Inclination*, and the difficulties so numerous which are to be surmounted in the ascent to virtue and glory, that without such measures of *divine assistance* as we have no right to promise ourselves, and such clear discoveries of the nature and degrees of felicity in another world as the *light of nature* cannot help us to, *but few*, in comparison, will *warmly espouse* the cause of virtue, and those few will advance with diffidence and perplexity, lest their vigilance and resolution should at last be overpowered. On this account, the Christian Revelation, which informs us of an *Almighty Spirit* communicated to all that sincerely implore his help, to enlighten, sanctify, assist, and comfort them, and delineates, in the most lively manner, the joys and glories of the *heavenly world*, can not be too much prized; as it hereby excites to the pursuit of virtue and immortality, such as would not have been wrought upon by lower motives, and inspires those with vigorous resolutions, an humble confidence, and joyful hopes, who have chosen the side of Religion. There are other ways in which the *Gospel-Revelation* contributes to the surer and easier acquisition of future happiness; having given us the most just and amiable representation of the Deity, as the great object of *worship*, of *imitation*,

tation, and of *injoyment*; hereby directing, and inſenſibly perſuading us to worſhip him, as alone worthy of our adoration and truſt, and to *worſhip him in ſpirit and truth*; to ſeek the perfection of our nature, by endeavouring *to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*; and to make choice of him as our ſupreme and everlaſting portion, which will naturally leſſen our opinion, and abate our love, of earthly things; the conſequence of which will be, that we ſhall the more eaſily overcome all the temptations ariſing from them. How plain and familiar is our duty made to us! And with what charms does virtue appear in the preſence of the Goſpel, ſo as not only to inſtruct, but allure us! And with ſtill greater in the *life of Jeſus*, which is ſuch an inforcement to his pure and heavenly commands, as no one, who dwells on the contemplation of it, will be able to reſiſt. Between the moſt excellent precepts, and ſuch an example, there is this difference, that the former exhibits only a picture of virtue, while in the latter it breathes and moves. I might add, the *whole ſyſtem of divine truths* contained in the Goſpel; which have the ſame tendency to enlarge the mind, to purify and exalt the affections, and to eſtabliſh the liberty of the Will, as that *ſwarm of errors* which filled the *Pagan* world had to confine, to pollute, and enſlave the ſoul; and, above all, the *love of God, and of Jeſus*,

ſus, which on all ingenuous ſpirits can never fail of producing the happieſt effects. Here then, there can be no room for a diſpute between Reaſon and Revelation, to which of them we are moſt beholden in the acquiſition of virtue and felicity.

SECT. V. It is, moreover, highly proper, that while we believe God's readineſs to forgive ſin, from the boundleſs compaſſions of his bleſſed nature, we ſhould conceive of ſin as the greateſt of all evils, and of God as having the utmoſt hatred and abhorrence of it, that we may the better know how to eſtimate his goodneſs and mercy in the pardon of ſin, and be ſet at a greater and more irreconcilable diſtance from it in our minds. But now what is there can give us ſo juſt and affecting an idea of theſe things, as the ſufferings and death of our Saviour, which, for this and other ends, God moſt holy and merciful was pleaſed to inſiſt upon as the price of our reconciliation?

SECT. VI. If we examine *the evidence itſelf*, we ſhall find the Chriſtian is in a much better condition than the Heathen; for while the Heathen had Reaſon only to truſt to, the Chriſtian hath both Reaſon and Revelation. Now, if we could even ſuppoſe the light which Reaſon affords in this important affair to be equal to that of Revelation; and that the bulk of mankind had all the *capacity*, *inclination*, *leiſure*, and *patience*, neceſ-

ſary

ſary to make the beſt of the argument (which is much more than can be ſuppoſed) yet, ſurely, the joint teſtimony of Reaſon and Revelation is to be preferred to that of Reaſon alone; ſince the additional evidence of Revelation is ſo much *clear gain.* But this is not all. Reaſon was very much fettered and oppreſſed, till Revelation ſet it free, and gave us the truth pure of all thoſe fabulous mixtures, which had not only diſguiſed it, but were a great weakening to it. * *Juvenal* takes notice, that in his time the ſtories of the infernal regions, the ſhades, and *Charon*'s boat, were the jeſt of children themſelves. And finding there was no ground for thoſe *fables* which had once been in the ſame credit with the *general notion* of a life after this, too many were ready to conclude, that the whole was no better than a chimæra, or at beſt to be in doubt about it, not knowing how to ſeparate between *reality* and *fiction* when they were ſo blended, or not willing to be at the pains to do it. The very ſame had happened in the queſtions concerning the *nature of God*, and *divine Providence*, about which the moſt learned and inquiſitive, by reaſon of the confuſion which had overſpread the *Pagan Theology*, did

* Eſſe aliquos manes, & ſubterranea regna,
Et contum, & ſtygio ranas in gurgite nigras,
Atque una tranſire vadum tot millia cymba,
Nec pueri credunt, niſi qui nondum ære lavantur.
Sat. 2.

did not diſcourſe in the moſt clear and conſiſtent manner. And of ſuch fatal conſequence was this *chaotick ſtate* of things, in which truth and error, light and darkneſs, lay jumbled together, that ſome turned *infidels*, others *ſcepticks*, on theſe fundamental articles of all Religion. As this proves, that we cannot argue the *inſufficiency of the evidence* from the number of *doubters*, ſo it may convince us of our obligations to the *Chriſtian Religion*, which by clearing the belief of a God, a Providence, and future recompences, from the abſurdities that were mingled with it, hath reſtored theſe glorious truths to their native luſtre and certainty. The concurrence of Revelation is the more valuable, as it is that which the world always expected, and were ſo fond of, as to fall in with every pretence of a Revelation, rather than be wholly without it. When all things continue as they were from the beginning, and God never ſpeaks to men but by his works, the mind, naturally diſtruſtful, will be apt to ſuggeſt, that, perhaps, we are miſtaken in thoſe concluſions, which God hath never ſeen fit to ratify by any extraordinary manifeſtations of his Will to mankind. All ſuch ſurmiſes are intirely obviated by the Goſpel of our Saviour. Which puts me in mind of the laſt thing,

SECT. VII. I ſhall add, *viz.* that the *ſatisfaction and acquieſcence* of the mind in any pro-

propoſition may not always be proportioned to the *evidence* we have of its truth, but may either exceed, or fall ſhort of it. There are two things more eſpecially which leſſen the ſatisfaction that Reaſon gives us in the preſent debate, the nature of *rational evidence*, and *guilt*. *Merely* rational evidence, whatever be its real weight, is not fitted to produce all that conviction which creatures, framed as we are, ſtand in need of. We are compounded of *body* and *mind*. The *Senſes* belong to the body, *Reaſon* to the mind, while *Imagination* is allied to both. Now, though Reaſon aſſure us of a Future State, yet our Senſes giving us no encouragement to hope for it, either directly, or indirectly, without a Revelation; and Imagination being prejudiced and carried away by Senſe, ſuch thoughts as theſe are apt to offer themſelves. What if, after all, there ſhould be no world to come, where the ſoul, which we never ſaw, exiſts without the body, on which it does at preſent depend in its operations! No one hath ever returned from that world to give us an account of it; when a man dies, he ſeems to be falling away into a ſtate of inſenſibility. Theſe, indeed, are unreaſonable prejudices, and ſo acknowledged, when a man reflects upon them; but they are prejudices which it is not very eaſy to get rid of. And it is very probable, that if this did not give the *firſt riſe* to the ſtories of *ſpectres* and *apparitions*,

apparitions, it was yet the occaſion of their being *multiplied*, and entertained ſo readily. The ground of this was, that mankind were not willing to want a ſort of evidence, which would ſerve to ſilence the cavils and ſuſpicions of the Imagination more effectually than rational evidence alone could do; and of this kind is that evidence which the *Chriſtian Religion* ſupplies us with; not *immediately*, but at *ſecond hand*. *Miracles* are *ſenſible* effects; the Chriſtian doctrine of immortality hath been confirmed by theſe; and, among other miracles, by the *reſurrection* of the divine Author of our Religion from the dead, and *aſcenſion* into heaven, in the ſight of a great number of ſpectators, of the truth of whoſe teſtimony we have no reaſon to doubt. Theſe proofs of the truth of our Religion have this advantage above the proofs of a Future State from Reaſon, that they affect the *Imagination* more, and lay hold of the mind, as it is *embodied*; which its own *abſtract reaſonings* do not, ſo as to beget the ſame pleaſing acquieſcence in them. And having this advantage, as *proofs of our Religion*, they have the ſame as *mediate* proofs of a *Future State*, which is plainly taught by this Religion, in *writings* capable of being read and underſtood by all, and holding forth the truth with an uniformity that *Reaſon* cannot pretend to; *Reaſon* being like a lamp, that burns ſometimes brighter, at other times

times more dimly. This, I am perſuaded, was one cauſe of thoſe *doubts* which the wiſer Heathens ſeem to have laboured under about a ſeparate ſtate of exiſtence, at the ſame time that they were arguing for it. If they were real doubts, they are not ſo likely to have proceeded from Reaſon, as from a dark Imagination. And it is remarkable that when they expreſs themſelves with the greateſt diffidence, it is in relation to any exiſtence at all beyond the grave, not of the happineſs of good men, ſuppoſing them to exiſt. Not but a conſciouſneſs of guilt, though it did not raiſe a jealouſy in the virtuous, of their being miſerable after death, might occaſion a doubt whether they ſhould be happy, and ſo add to the doubt, firſt ſuggeſted by the Imagination, that poſſibly they might not be at all.

SECT. VIII. *Guilt* is apt to make men, thoſe *eſpecially* who have fallen into *greater ſins*, ſuſpicious and fearful; as it is fit it ſhould, that, by this uneaſy ſituation of mind which it produces, they might, as it were *naturally*, be taught to be more cautious and circumſpect. Hence the doctrine of the rewardableneſs of ſincere virtue, though mixed with many failings, which to one unconcerned in the queſtion, as an *Angel* for inſtance, is manifeſt and certain; by another, whoſe very caſe this is, that his motion to good is not undivided, may not be entertained

tained without some degree of distrust and hesitation. Yea, which is more, the good man, who, being judge in his own cause, hath doubts hanging on his mind about his final state, shall have none at all about another good man, or where the case is only supposed; notwithstanding the degree of goodness, which in *hypothesi* he believes sufficient to entitle men to a reward in the next life, be really no greater than he is possessed of. All these fears and doubts, which obscure the evidence of this comfortable truth, are not to be removed any other way so well, as by the express declarations of the love of God to *apostate man*; by kind and repeated invitations to trust in the divine mercy; by bringing down the terms of acceptance as low as any wise and good man would desire, in a *covenant* established for this purpose; and finally, by a clear and distinct account of the method taken to reconcile the different claims of *holiness* and *goodness*; or, if you will, of *wisdom*, pronouncing it *unfit*, that a reasonable, virtuous, and naturally immortal Being, should be extinguished, only because its virtue hath not that perfection which the present condition of the Being will not admit of; and of the same *wisdom*, declaring it *fit*, that God should manifest his displeasure against the sins of men, in a way most proper to possess them with the greatest hatred of sin, and reverence

rence to the divine law. These are the most likely means of restoring peace to a misgiving heart; and all these we find in the Christian Religion, which, for this very reason, every serious mind will esteem *worthy of all acceptation.*

SECT. IX. The *conclusion* from the whole is, that *life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel.* The objects of the other world appeared before as things beheld in the *twilight*, or by the light of the *moon*, and *stars*, not without a great deal of obscurity and indistinctness; they are now enlightened by the noon-day. A scene of glory presents itself to our eyes. We know, how God came to be so liberal and kind to sinful imperfect creatures, as to bestow upon them a reward which innocence itself could not claim. We know, how satisfaction was made to divine justice, and the gates of the *heavenly city* opened for our admission there. We see *Jesus* dying as *our sacrifice*, rising as *our head*, ascending to heaven as *our leader*, and taking possession in *our name*; *whither he is gone we know, and the way we know.* Christianity is perpetually setting the rewards of another world before our view, abounds with promises relating to a life after this, courts us to look off *from things seen to things unseen*, to the glories of heaven, and the joys of eternity; and describes, in the most particular manner, the character of those for

whom the future bleſſedneſs is deſigned, that all ſuch may be encouraged in well-doing, and chearfully ſubmit to the various trials and ſufferings of the preſent life, in hope of thoſe better things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

AN

APPENDIX,

Being ſome further

THOUGHTS

ON THE

Proofs of a FUTURE STATE

FROM

REASON.

INTRODUCTION.

" I Can ſafely aver that no man ever " thought of the next world with more " application than myſelf. It is ſtupidity to " ſet up our reſt in a life that may terminate " every moment. Curioſity alone will make " us inquiſitive to know what ſhall become " of us after death; being too dear to our- " ſelves to agree to the irrecoverable loſs of " our own beings.——The horror of a diſ- " ſolution is no other way to be effectually " conquered but by the firm perſuaſion of " another life." Theſe are the words of a *great Wit*, and a *man of Pleaſure* *. In another place the *ſame* Gentleman, (if I miſtake not) writing to a Friend, tells him, " Study as much as you pleaſe to know " yourſelf, conſult all your books, ſpend " your beſt days in reflecting upon the im- " mortality of the ſoul, you will at laſt be " convinced that Religion (*i. e. Revelation*) " alone can decide the queſtion. As to my- " ſelf, I confeſs, were it not for *that*, the " thoughts of eternity would never take up " the moſt uſeleſs moments of my life."

* Monſ. *Evremont*.

Are theſe thoughts and reaſonings well conſiſtent? Would it be ſtupidity to ſet up our reſt in this tranſitory life, and at the ſame time a reſolution becoming a wiſe and ſober man, if he had no other light but that of *Reaſon*, not to allow any of his moſt idle moments to the thoughts of eternity? Is the curioſity of looking beyond death ſo eaſily ſubdued, or ſatisfied? Could we arrive no further than probability, ought we not to expreſs ſome concern about an event, though only probable, of ſuch infinite importance? It is granted, that *Reaſon* will not lead us ſo far as *Revelation* in this inquiry, nor open ſo bright and wide a ſcene as that does. And yet, the pleaſure to an inquiſitive mind is not little of tracing the footſteps of truth, with *Reaſon* only for its companion and guide. *Reaſon* diſcovers enough to awaken the ſollicitude of every *wiſe man*, and to encourage the hopes, and ſpirit the endeavours, of every man that is *truly good*. I need therefore no apology for applying my thoughts again to ſo important a ſubject *.

* The preceding Treatiſe was publiſhed in the year 1730.—This which is added by way of *Appendix* was found, ſince the death of the Reverend and Learned Author, among his Manuſcripts, and wrote fair for the Preſs.

The

The weight of Tradition *in this argument further considered; and an* Objection *from hence answered.*

A Future ſtate of exiſtence hath been the belief of all mankind from the earlieſt times of which we have any account, and in the moſt diſtant nations. It is true, a very learned man [a] calls the immortality of the ſoul a moſt noble invention of the *Egyptians*. But what is the meaning of this *noble invention*, ſaith another [b]. Is it that none ever thought of it before them? And that all others derived it from them? He evidently proves the contrary [c]. The *Egyptians* aſſerted the paſſing of the ſoul from one body to another, till at laſt it came into a human body [d]. And of this noble invention let them have the honour, and not the *Græcians*. It is great pity they ſhould loſe it, ſince *Diodorus Siculus* ſaith, the ſoul of *Oſyris* paſſed into a bull, which is the reaſon that they give ſo much honour to that animal.

[a] Sir *J. Marſham*'s Can. Chron. [b] *Stillingfleet*'s Orig. Sacr. Add. L. 1. C. 1. [c] Vid. etiam Voſſii Theol. Gentil. L. 1. C. 10. [d] Herod. L. 2. C. 123.

The tranſmigration, taught by the *Pythagoreans* and *Platoniſts*, was quite another thing; they aſſerting no tranſmigration of the ſouls of *good men*, and of *very bad men* only into the bodies of *beaſts*, not to animate them, or ſupply the place of a ſoul to them, but to be confined to the bodies of ſeveral animals as their priſons [e]. Thus far then, let the claim on the behalf of the *Egyptians* be allowed. But, *in general*, that the ſouls of men exiſt after death, and are rewarded or puniſhed according as their actions have been, was not firſt taught by the *Egyptians*, but, for ought appears, hath been the reigning notion ever ſince there were men in the world. [f] *Cicero* therefore argues for a Future State from the authority of *all antiquity*, which the leſs diſtant it was from the original of things, and a divine progeny, could perhaps better judge of what was true. *Timæus Locrus* obſerves [g], that what occurs in *Homer* relating to the inviſible world was taken from *ancient Tradition*. *Plato* ſpeaking of the ſame reports, not only ſtyles them *ancient* [h], but *very ancient* [i], deducing the law of retributions after death from the reign of *Saturn*, which is the ſame with the firſt age of mankind [k], without the leaſt mention, that they learned this from the *Egyptians*, to whom he was no ſtranger. And,

[e] Vid. loc. cit. [f] Tuſ. Quæſt. L. I. S. 12. [g] De An. Mundi. [h] Phæd. [i] De Legib. [k] Gorgias.

And, indeed, the reaſon of the thing makes it abſurd to imagine that any opinion or cuſtom ſhould firſt ſpring up in one particular country, (the world being thoroughly peopled) and from thence, as from a center, ſpread itſelf over the whole earth, notwithſtanding the *greateſt diſtances of places* (ſome of them ſeparated from one another, *oceano diſſociabili*, by oceans rolling between) and *diverſity of cuſtoms and languages.*

Who will pretend to ſay *when* and *where* the veneration paid to *dead men* firſt began? The very uncertainty of its original intimates the antiquity of the practice. And what leſs does this cuſtom prove than a perſuaſion that the ſouls of great men were not extinguiſhed with their bodies[l]? Therefore *Cyrus* in his dying ſpeech, where he diſcourſes admirably of the immortality of the ſoul, aſks his ſons, "whether they thought the dead would have "been followed with ſuch laſting honours, if "their ſouls had had no power left them[m]?"

I deſign not this as a direct and concluſive argument of a Future State, but, rather, as a *ne-*

[l] Si ut ſapientibus placet, non cum corpore extinguantur magnæ animæ. Tacit. Vit. Agric.

[m] Xen. ΚΥΡΟΥ παιδ: To the ſame purpoſe Cicer. de Nat. Deor. L. 2. S. 24. Suſcepit autem vita hominum, conſuetudoq; communis, ut beneficiis excellentes viros in cœlum fama, ac voluntate tollerent. Hinc Hercules, hinc Caſtor, &c. quorum cùm remanerent animi, atque æternitate fruerentur, dii ritè ſunt habiti; cùm et optimi eſſent, et æterni.

a *negative mark* of the truth, *i. e.* such a mark as we may juſtly expect to find, ſuppoſing the truth of the thing in queſtion: for this being a matter in which all who partake of Reaſon have an equal intereſt, if they have any intereſt at all, ſhould it, upon inquiry, appear to be very common for men to have no notion of a life to come, could any time be aſſigned when this belief began, or any people be mentioned among whom it had never got any footing, it would be a conſiderable difficulty in our way, which we ſhould be obliged to remove before we proceeded to conſider the *poſitive proofs* of a Future State. But, as it happens, appearances are more favourable, and the notion of future recompences, like that of the exiſtence of a Deity, hath this mark of a truth of *univerſal concernment*, that it is *univerſally received*. This is of ſome moment, be it only as a preſumption in favour of the doctrine; for ſince no one can reaſonably ſet it down for an error into which mankind have been led through the depravity of their inclinations and manners; or pretend that it is no more than a corruption of ſome *original truth* (as *Idolatry* was of *Theiſm*) there is no reaſon to be given ſo eaſy and natural of the *univerſality* of this perſuaſion, and its having gotten ſuch faſt hold of the minds of men, as God's having ſo framed human nature that by a kind of inſtinct or prepoſſeſſion they allow

allow the truth of the notion, as ſomething born with them, and of the growth of their own minds, rather than imported from abroad.

And why hath the author of nature thus ſtrongly inclined us to the belief of a Future State (if it be really a *natural propenſion*, as it ſeems to be) but that the great body of mankind who ſeldom trouble themſelves to reaſon out the truth might be ingaged, without much reaſoning, to form their moral conduct by this belief, and by that means obtain the beſt end of all knowledge, *viz.* a life of virtue *now* in order to a happy life *hereafter?* While perſons of a more inquiſitive genius, and of greater leiſure and capacity, are by theſe firſt glimmerings of truth invited to purſue after it; and not being without ſucceſs in their purſuits, are better able to form the idea of a happineſs ſuitable to the dignity of the reaſonable nature, and better qualified to be inſtructors and examples of the world about them; at leaſt, it is their own fault if they are not.

That there is nothing in the *Objection* againſt the rational evidence of a life to come from what will be readily acknowledged, that mankind receive the firſt notice of it from *Tradition*, the little that hath been ſaid elſewhere is ſufficient to ſhew; upon which account, I ſay nothing to it here.

Should

Should it be further urged, that excepting a few extraordinary genius's ſcattered here and there, the reſt of the heathen world took the thing for granted without being able to *prove* it, grounding their belief upon *general conſent* not barely as the *firſt*, but as the *only* cauſe of it, (not to obſerve that they could no more make out other truths by a chain of reaſoning, as for inſtance the exiſtence of a God) I ſhall think it enough to retort the argument againſt the greater part of perſons profeſſing *Chriſtianity*, who found their belief of a Future State immediately upon *the Authority of Scripture*, but then have little more to offer for the Authority of *Scripture* than *Tradition*.

Let it be granted, that good Chriſtians are able to plead the happy effects which they have experienced from their Religion as one argument of its excellence. And cannot the virtuous heathen argue after much the ſame manner for the notion of future rewards, by which he hath been ſo ſtrongly influenced in the diſcharge of his duty, notwithſtanding any ſelf-denial, and outward diſadvantages attending it? This hath inclined me to think that the *main* difference between *common Chriſtians* and *common Heathens* doth not lie *ſo much* in greater degrees of evidence which *Chriſtians* have above *Heathens* (much leſs in this, that the thing is to one *demonſtratively certain*, to the other *barely poſſible)* the

the faith of both being, in great part, reſolvable into *Tradition*; as in the *clearer notions* which the Chriſtian hath of the *happineſs* of another life, and the *peculiar advantages* injoyed by him in his *preparation* for it.

But what if it ſhould prove that the Philoſophers themſelves who hunted after evidence, and made the beſt they could of every argument, were, after all, more obliged to *Tradition* than to *Reaſon*, and got little elſe, by putting the matter upon the trial of *Reaſon*, but to be under greater uncertainty about it; even thoſe of them that would have been glad to ſee the thing clearly proved? What if *Reaſon* can only ſtart doubts and difficulties, not lay them, or ſo much as furniſh arguments to ballance againſt them? This is ſaid to have been the caſe with the wiſeſt and beſt of the *Pagan* Philoſophers; and *Socrates* himſelf hath been brought as an inſtance of one *willing* to be ſatisfied, but never *able* to arrive at any ſatisfaction.

To this it may be anſwered, that all who were deſirous of *ſatisfaction* might have it, though they did not pretend to *demonſtration*, and would therefore ſometimes argue upon the ſuppoſition of its being otherwiſe than they believed it; a method that hath been taken even with Atheiſts themſelves, whoſe folly in being ſo zealouſly attached to ſuch a wretched ſcheme of things hath been thought to be ſufficiently expoſed by repreſenting the melan-

melancholy condition to which mankind would be reduced, ſuppoſing the truth of their principles, that there is no God, no Providence, no Future Account. And, whereas, upon the compariſon between the *philoſophical* and *vulgar* part of the *heathen world*, the latter may ſeem to have had the advantage in this, that they were not liable to have their minds diſturbed, as the former, by doubts and objections on the oppoſite ſide; this is no manner of reproach to *Philoſophy*, as if it only tended to unſettle the minds of men, the very ſame thing happening, though in a leſs degree, to thoſe who injoy a *Revelation*; of whom as many as think for themſelves, and weigh the arguments *for* and *againſt* Chriſtianity, or any particular article of it, are encountered with difficulties that never come into the heads of ordinary people. The evidence is ſufficient to determine the aſſent of any uncorrupted judge, and yet becauſe there are objections lying againſt it, and theſe objections offer themſelves ſometimes when the anſwers to them are not ſo ready at hand, nor perhaps the arguments that ſhould counteract them, a wiſe and good man may for the preſent be made a little uneaſy by them; eſpecially when they find him in a dull and melancholy humour, and too much diſpoſed to quarrel with the order of things in the preſent ſtate.

But

But then this does not describe the ordinary state of his mind, nor destroy the excess of evidence that the arguments *for* the truth hath above those that are brought *against* it; he hath usually great peace in believing, hath no reason to wish he had slept on in an *implicit faith*, and is far from deserving the character of a *doubter*. A like apology will serve for those among the *heathens*, who out of love to the truth did not rest their belief of another world purely upon *Tradition*. Their attempts to give light to a subject of such moment were laudable, and carried their own reward with them; what they lost in respect of the *negative tranquility* of the vulgar being more than compensated by the *positive* philosophical *pleasure* which they received in contemplating the face of truth by its own light. Nor do they appear to have laboured under any *such* doubts as would denominate them rather *scepticks* than *believers*. *Cicero* (who, one would think, should be a better judge of the sentiments of *Socrates* upon this head, and the temper and view in which he uttered some things that looked like doubting, than *we* are; *Cicero*, I say) takes notice that this Philosopher, who by the oracle of *Apollo* was pronounced *the wisest of men*, did not say now one thing, and then another, upon this question, as he did in most others, but always asserted the same thing,

thing, *viz.* "that the minds of men are di-
"vine, and being departed out of the body
"return to heaven, ſo much the more ſpee-
"dily, as they excell more in virtue and
"goodneſs[n]." In this paſſage, would not *Cicero* be underſtood to ſay, that neither the thoughts or diſcourſes of *Socrates* were fluctuating and undetermined about the immortality of the ſoul, as about ſome other matters?

At worſt, it cannot be much wondered, if the *general truth* of a Future State of Rewards and Puniſhments ſuffered by the *fables* that were mixed with it, and *good arguments* by being thrown together with others that were *weak* and *inconcluſive*; that this ſhould happen in the queſtion concerning a Future State is not at all ſtrange, when the confuſion that reigned in the *pagan theology* had ſuch an influence upon *Cotta*, that he ſeems to have reſolved his religious faith into the authority of his Anceſtors, to whoſe eſtabliſhments he thought himſelf obliged to ſubmit, without demanding any reaſon for the giving up the whole queſtion about the Nature and Providence of the Gods as inexplicable, and indefenſible upon any other foot. Had he after having undeified thoſe whom the vulgar, and philoſophers too like the vulgar, accounted Gods, barely declared, or hinted

[n] Cicero de Amicit.

hinted his belief of one ſupreme governing mind, it had been ſomething. But all that he does is to *deſtroy*, not *build*, unleſs that may be called *building*, when he diſcovers an inclination to eſtabliſh a *blind unconſcious Nature* in the room of a *divine Reaſon and Intelligence*, in order to account for the harmony in the ſeveral parts of the univerſe. The argument againſt *Providence* from the evils and diſorders that are in the world he preſſes with all his might, without offering one word by way of anſwer to it. *Balbus*, indeed, tells him, that, it being then too late for it, he would, with his leave, at ſome other time reply to what he had ſaid; to which the other returned very civilly, that he deſired nothing more than to be confuted by him, and knew very well that he ſhould prove an eaſy conqueſt. But as this time never came, ſo we are to underſtand this of *Cotta* to be no other than a compliment to his friend, not to ſay a ſneer; or, at beſt, was but a poor come-off after ſo many bold and dangerous things as he had ſaid before. *Cicero* the Author of the Dialogue makes this cold reflection upon the whole, " that *Velleius* " thought *Cotta* to have had the better in the " argument, while to him the diſcourſe of " *Balbus* appeared to have a greater ſimilitude " of truth".

De Nat. Deor. L. 3. S. 2, 3. S. 11.

Was this a fit manner of expreſſing themſelves, and of treating a ſubject of ſuch importance if they had had any thing more certain and inſtructive to ſay upon it? Now, from hence ſhall we conclude, that there is no coming to the knowledge of a God by the light of nature, but by Revelation only? (Which was the opinion of *Socinus*, and ſome of his followers) No certainly; and yet we might do this almoſt as reaſonably as others have argued againſt the natural proofs of a Future State from a few doubtful expreſſions which have dropped from ſome of the beſt of the Philoſophers about it.

Happy we who have the benefit of the Goſpel-Revelation, for which we cannot be too thankful, while we pity wretched miſtaken mortals wandring in the miſts of Paganiſm! Beſides a ſcene intirely new opened to us, and the additional evidence caſt upon thoſe objects that were in ſome degree known before, we have this further advantage, that our Reaſon is at firſt ſetting out put in the right way, and only prepoſſeſt on the ſide of truth, by which means we are able to proceed more readily, and to argue more juſtly and ſtrongly upon points of *natural Religion*; which is what the oppoſers of *natural* to *revealed* Religion do not conſider as they ought. Yet, let us not therefore argue, that *Reaſon can afford no proof of a Future*

Future State; but thus (which is very true) that *Reaſon* ſet wrong in the beginning, and accuſtomed to falſe principles is not ſo well qualified to ſeparate truth from error, to point out the beſt arguments in defence of the truth, and to urge them with the ſame ſtrength and advantage, as when it hath every thing to aſſiſt, and nothing to obſtruct and pervert its operations.

The End of the THIRD VOLUME.